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PROGRAMME PLANNING

Country and intercountry programmes and projects

THIRD COUNTRY PROGRAMME FOR MAURITANIA\*

<u>Programme period</u>	<u>Actual resources programmed</u>	\$
1987-1991	IPF for 1987-1991	13 475 000
	Balance from third cycle	(520 000)
	Other resources programmed	<u>1 353 866</u>
	Total	14 308 866

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\* Detailed listings of projects and other related data prepared as part of the country programming exercise are available on request. These listings include: (a) ongoing projects; (b) proposed projects; (c) distribution of resources by objective; (d) distribution of new country programme by sector.

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## I. DEVELOPMENT TRENDS, STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES

### A. Current economic trends

1. After a period in the 1960s characterized by a relatively high growth rate, the performance of the Mauritanian economy has been weak. The growth of the gross national product (GNP) in real terms averaged 1 per cent during the period 1970-1978. A recovery that began in 1979 was of brief duration, and per capita GNP actually declined by 0.6 per cent annually in real terms from 1980 to 1984, despite a very high investment rate (32 per cent of GNP). Investments were financed mainly by loans and international credits.
2. The high volume of investments and the stagnation in production resulted in large deficits in the State budget and balance of payments (equivalent to 7.9 per cent and 26 per cent, respectively, of 1984 GNP) and an external debt of more than double the 1984 GNP, whose servicing amounted to the equivalent of 36 per cent of export earnings.
3. This sluggish growth was caused, inter alia, by the persistence of depressed world prices for iron ore, traditionally the country's principal source of foreign currency, and by the long and repeated drought spells, which upset the productivity base of the rural economy, severely reducing the livestock population and grain production. To these exogenous causes were added the effects of the short but costly war in the Western Sahara, the implementation of a sizeable investment programme in the industrial sector which proved to be unprofitable and, in general, bad management of the public and semi-public sector.
4. The Sahelian drought affected Mauritania more profoundly than the other countries of the Sahel because of its geographical situation. Apart from the temporary effects on rural production, and consequently on national economic performance, figures show that the homes and work patterns of the population have been radically and almost irreversibly disrupted. Drought and desertification have pushed formerly nomad peoples towards the cities, resulting in rapidly growing human settlements and the development of a fragile tertiary economy. Agricultural villages have also been decimated or even abandoned. More than one third of the 1,800,000 inhabitants of the country are today urbanized or camped around urban settlements. The capital, Nouakchott, which had a population of 135,000 according to the 1977 census, now has at least 400,000 inhabitants, including the peripheral camps.
5. The structural food dependency of the country worsened following the years when rainfall was particularly scarce. Grain harvests from 1982 to 1984 did not even cover 10 per cent of consumption. Despite a fair amount of rain in 1985, the harvest did not even cover 25 per cent of food needs. As the Government lacks the financial resources to import grain on such a large scale, Mauritania annually receives international food aid. The drought has also contributed to the ruin of a large part of the rural or formerly rural population, which now depends on the distribution of large amounts of free food.

6. Rapid desertification, characterized in particular by the invasion of productive land by moving sand dunes, makes any recovery of rural activities in certain regions difficult.
7. On the other hand, a sector which has been steadily growing in the past few years is that of fishing, which started at a very modest level and has now become the biggest source of export earnings.
8. To reverse the unfavourable economic trends, the Government adopted a stabilization programme in 1979, followed by the preparation and launching of the Fourth Economic and Social Development Plan (1981-1985), which included an ambitious investment programme with an apparently bright future. Unfortunately, this plan had been based on optimistic assumptions about exogenous factors which were not borne out; the plan had also underestimated the structural and institutional constraints of the Mauritanian economy. Only a few of the objectives were reached; the Government completely revised the plan in 1983 and began the process of economic reorientation and structural reforms which culminated in the preparation of the Economic and Financial Recovery Programme for 1985-1988. This was presented to the international community of donors at a meeting of a Consultative Group on Mauritania at Paris in November 1985. It was well received, and expressions of interest and pledges covered \$700 million of the \$830 million in external financing required to carry out the programme. There are promising signs that the remainder will also be covered.

#### B. National development strategies

9. The Mauritanian Government's development strategies were presented in the form of the Economic and Financial Recovery Programme for 1985-1988 (PREF), prepared in co-operation with the World Bank, which is aimed at both financial stabilization and recovery of economic growth. The principal macro-economic objectives of PREF are the following:

(a) To maintain an annual GNP growth rate in real terms of 4 per cent, i.e., higher than the demographic growth rate of 2.7 per cent;

(b) To improve the productivity of investments while maintaining a public investment rate of less than 20 per cent of GNP;

(c) To balance the State budget by 1986, and gradually to introduce budget savings which could cover 15 per cent of the State's investments by 1988;

(d) To reduce the deficit in the balance of payments by increasing net exports from the modern sector and decreasing imports of goods in real terms. The current external deficit would be lowered to less than 10 per cent of GNP by 1988.

10. To reach these goals, the Government first set up a short-term stabilization programme designed as part of a stand-by agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in April 1985. This stand-by agreement made it possible for Mauritania to re-schedule the payments on its external debt until March 1986, and similar

re-scheduling arrangements are being envisaged for the future. Stabilization measures already taken by the Government include the devaluation of the ouguiya, an increase in the price of agricultural products, a hiring freeze in the public sector and the implementation of a reorganization programme for public enterprises.

11. For medium- and long-term development, the Government has defined its macro-economic policy framework in the PREF (with a matrix of concrete measures), as well as in a public investment programme (including pre-investment studies) which provides an indication of what external resources are needed to carry out the programme.

12. The macro-economic policy includes the following elements:

- (a) A flexible exchange rate to restore equilibrium in the balance of payments;
- (b) A monetary policy with restricted credit, primarily oriented towards private industry;
- (c) An austerity policy in public finances;
- (d) A gradual liberalization of prices;
- (e) An improvement in occupational and job training, and creation of jobs by the private sector;
- (f) The rehabilitation of the semi-public sector;
- (g) The introduction of sectoral strategies and investment programmes, giving priority to the most productive sectors (fishing and agriculture) and rehabilitation projects;
- (h) The introduction of an institutional framework designed to promote private investment and the mobilization of the people to participate in meeting their own basic needs.

13. The public investment programme stresses very selective investment projects and pre-investment studies, preferably characterized by medium-term profitability and a concern for improving past investments.

The accompanying projects, in particular in the social sectors, have been limited to those which meet the most basic needs and call for the participation of the people. This problem was discussed at the Paris meeting of the Consultative Group, and the Government expressed its interest in launching a vast operation of "food for work", which would make it possible to provide jobs for the people who had been marginalized outside the cities after the drought, and to slow down the exodus of the rural population.

14. For the period 1985-1988, financing is sought, in the amount of \$251 million, for 193 new projects, distributed as follows (in percentages):

	<u>§</u>		<u>§</u>
Rural sector (water resources portion)	42.1 (8.3)	Infrastructures	10.0
Industry/handicrafts	2.0	Information/telecommunications	1.3
Mining	1.2	Human settlements/urbanism	1.9
Fishing	8.7	Education	4.8
Energy	1.0	Health	3.2
Urban water resources	17.2	Miscellaneous	6.0

Priority has been granted to the rural sector in order to take advantage of the irrigation possibilities of the new dams, reduce the high food deficit and stop the process of galloping urbanization.

15. The sectoral strategies and programmes of action are sometimes only indications of general trends, unsupported as yet by statistics and in-depth studies. PREF envisages a certain number of studies on which future measures will be based. One study is being prepared on the formulation of a long-term strategy and programme of specific action in the fishing sector. Moreover, some studies and consultations are anticipated in the water resources and irrigated agriculture sectors. The final phase of the sectoral programmes will culminate in sectoral meetings of interested donors. For the three sectors mentioned, the meetings are provisionally set for the end of 1986 or beginning of 1987.

### C. Technical co-operation priorities

16. An overall evaluation of the needs and priorities in technical co-operation has not been carried out in a systematic manner. The needs have been identified within the context of specific government services, to complement investment projects or to ensure certain important functions. The Government has normally had to hold separate discussions with each individual donor, and the orientation of technical co-operation has naturally been influenced from time to time by the interests and priority perceptions of donors.

17. However, over the recent years of extreme drought, plans for emergency measures have been worked out by the departments directly concerned, under central co-ordination and with precise indications of international technical assistance requirements in connection with such emergency measures.

18. The Economic and Financial Recovery Programme (PREF) has not attempted to identify technical co-operation needs and establish priorities. UNDP will intervene within the framework of this programme to assist the Government to identify the technical co-operation which would be desirable to support measures planned in the Recovery Programme (see para. 78).

#### D. Arrangements for co-ordination of aid

19. The co-ordination of aid has been developed particularly with regard to emergency measures. The National Assistance Committee for Populations Stricken by Drought (CNAPES), under the guidance of the permanent secretary of the Military Committee for National Safety, is responsible for protecting the inhabitants against the effects of drought by co-ordinating actions undertaken by national services and foreign emergency aid. The National Assistance Committee is supported by a Technical Committee in which the donors, including UNDP, participate.

20. Aid co-ordination undertaken by the donors is as follows:

(a) Participation in the Technical Committee of CNAPES;

(b) Meetings of main donors under the guidance of the Resident Co-ordinator of the United Nations, in order to follow the development of the emergency situation and to co-ordinate action undertaken;

(c) United Nations Agencies Committee which meets monthly to exchange information, prepare reports and identify co-operation opportunities;

(d) Within the specific area of food aid, the World Food Programme (WFP) provides information and co-operation services to the Commissariat for Food Security and to donors. This co-operation provides follow-up services for food aid provided by some donors who are not represented in Nouakchott.

21. With regard to development aid, co-ordination by the Government has been traditionally provided by the Department for Territorial Planning and Management, recently incorporated into the Department of Economy and Finances. Co-ordination and central control functions have been strengthened by the adoption of the Economic and Financial Recovery Programme. A Monitoring Committee has been established, composed of the Minister for Economy and Finances, the Governor of the Central Bank and the Secretary-General of the Prime Minister's Office. This committee will be assisted by a technical committee which will contain representatives of the technical departments.

22. The Monitoring Committee is not only responsible for the co-ordination of technical assistance but for all aspects of the implementation of the Economic and Financial Recovery Programme. International aid is planned to assist in the identification and implementation of monitoring procedures and to take suitable measures for such monitoring. A large part of this assistance, of which the exact modalities still have to be defined, will be provided by the World Bank. Under this programme, UNDP provides assistance for monitoring sectoral projects of the Economic and Financial Recovery Programme. After the meeting of the Consultative Group, co-ordination of financial donors for following up the recovery programme is ensured by the World Bank.

23. Sectoral meetings mentioned in paragraph 15 above will facilitate the co-ordination of donor contributions. Such co-ordination will be strengthened by more systematic identification of needs for technical assistance and personnel training to be undertaken with the aid of UNDP.

## II. COUNTRY PROGRAMME

### A. Evaluation of the current programme

24. The current country programme (1983-1986) spans nearly five years of the third UNDP programming cycle, separate financing of \$2,383,000 having been provided for 1982. The indicative planning figure (IPF), first set at \$24,500,000, was reduced to \$13,475,000. After loans made during the second cycle and borrowings of the fourth cycle, the amount available for the 1983-1986 programme had reached \$10,218,000.

25. The yearly disbursement rate of the programme, after having stood at 80 per cent during the first two years, has speeded up, and for 1985 was over 95 per cent of available resources. At the end of 1986, it is expected that the implementation rate of the programme as a whole will reach approximately 95 per cent.

26. At the beginning of the 1983-1986 period, 20 projects were being carried out. At the end of 1985, after closures (12) and opening of other projects, 21 remained in hand.

27. For the 1983-1986 period, the IPF funds were increased by special UNDP resources to a total of \$2,361,379 for 10 projects, allocated as follows:

(a) Special Measures Fund for Least Developed Countries, \$550,379 for two projects;

(b) \$511,000 in special programme resources for four other projects;

(c) The United Nations Emergency Operations Fund, \$1,300,000 for four other projects.

28. UNDP resources have in addition been increased for six projects by complementary financing. For the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO): \$6,028,798 (with contributions from the Arab Gulf Programme for the United Nations Organizations (AGFUND) and from Denmark, Italy and Norway). For the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF): \$3,684,000. For the World Food Programme (WFP): \$299,949. For the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO): \$1,030,214 (with a gift by Italy). For the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat): \$61,601. Resources thus mobilized in addition to those of UNDP reached \$11,104,562 for the duration of the projects, of which \$8,471,148 were intended for the 1983-1986 period.

29. Still within the area of co-operation, close relationships have been established between some country programme projects and regional projects, in particular in the areas of agro-meteorology, agricultural statistics, seed production, vocational training and customs computerization.

30. UNDP technical assistance has constituted a substantial addition to capital assistance provided by the World Bank (vocational training and rehabilitation of public enterprises) and by Saudi Arabia (construction and repair of fishing boats).



31. Some projects appear to have paved the way for more important development programmes, such as the dune fixation programme, improved seed production and assistance to rural craftsmen. The first phase of the new agricultural advisory services programme is to lead to a national programme which will require participation by several sources of assistance.

32. During the preparation of the 1983-1986 programme, six fields of activity have been chosen, in particular those which had been recommended in the meeting of resident representatives of Sahelian countries held in Dakar in January 1981. After more than three years of implementation of the programme, the breakdown of IPF resources (1982-1986) among these fields of activity has been altered in the following way:

<u>Fields of activity</u>	<u>Originally</u>	<u>Currently</u>
Self-sufficiency in food	29.1	26.7
Infrastructural and economic management	25.4	17.6
Water management	17.1	16.0
Development of the Sahelian region	10.7	10.6
Human resources/training	9.3	17.6
Diversification of the economy	8.4	11.5

Adjustments have been relatively minor, and the original division of resources has been generally respected, with one exception where a project was abandoned.

33. It is too early to judge the results of all the projects of the programme, because some require a long-term effort. In general, good results, or substantive progress, have been obtained for projects concerned with Human resources/training, of which the most important are in the areas of vocational training and orthopaedics. Satisfactory progress was made in the Development of the Sahelian region (primarily with the dune fixation project) and in the most important field: Self-sufficiency in food. In the field of Infrastructural and economic management the most important project concerns assistance to semi-public enterprises, its main aim of introducing a national accounting plan has been achieved. Results in the field of Water management have been rather disappointing; there are many reasons for this but they stem mainly from a weakness in planning and follow-up operations. Mixed results were obtained under Diversification of the economy where the aim is to reorganize industry, commerce and geological and mining resources.

34. The rapid growth of the ambitions and responsibilities of the national administration has not always been accompanied by adequate institutional development and sufficient resources in the form of qualified personnel and budgetary facilities. This has slowed the progress of certain projects, in particular, where requirements were underestimated from the beginning (which also indicates insufficient identification and planning of projects). Nevertheless, this programme has been successful in its long-term efforts to strengthen institutions and make them more efficient.
35. The programme has not been particularly oriented towards preparation for investment, and activities in this area have not produced any results so far.
36. The launching of rural projects based on the active participation of populations is a new aspect of the programme. The dune fixation project is the first of this kind; results are encouraging but not yet conclusive. UNDP has not yet begun to support labour-intensive rural community work or "food for work" programmes. Field work will begin during 1986.
37. Assistance in sectoral planning has been provided in the area of rural development (one adviser) and in the struggle against desertification, by providing financial support to two national evaluation seminars, one on the strategy for water resources development, and the other on agricultural advisory services. The nature of these actions itself makes an evaluation of their impact very difficult.
38. With regard to programme planning, it should be said first that projects very often have included UNDP financing of some local expenses. This rather liberal approach has been justified by the economic and financial crisis of the country and especially by its limited budgetary resources. This support has not always been provided in ideal amounts, but there is no doubt that a very strict policy would have seriously hindered regular project development.
39. Most projects were well staffed with international personnel. In rural projects, United Nations volunteers are progressively taking over the functions which were previously carried out by experts; the number of volunteers has doubled over the last three years. Results have been generally positive when volunteers were trained by experienced experts and placed only with relatively well-organized government agencies. Some projects have been implemented without the local presence of international personnel (periodic visits by consultants or national personnel, one project being carried out by the Government). Results of those projects have been very mixed.
40. The new format for project documents was introduced from 1985 onwards. Previously, some documents had been prepared in order to facilitate progress evaluation, while others had been produced without any clear aim. Although some projects - not necessarily bad ones - are such that they cannot be given verifiable aims and precise work plans, experience has nevertheless shown the importance of carefully prepared documentation.

41. The following observations have made it possible to draw general conclusions which were taken into account in the preparation of the new programme and will again be kept in mind when preparing projects under the new programme:

(a) On the whole, the programme now under way has been adapted to the needs of the country. No major project could be called unjustified;

(b) Nevertheless, the impact of the programme has been reduced because it is dispersed. This dispersal was not so much due to the number of projects; there are currently around 20 permanent projects, of which about half are the result of UNDP contributions to joint actions while the remainder consist of small local operations. The dispersal is primarily the result of the diversity of sectors covered. Certain major operations, although well carried out, have had a reduced impact because no follow-up had been planned or financed. One aim of programming over the last few years, especially when preparing a new programme, has been to concentrate on a small number of central objectives and to provide funds for maintaining the progress made and for the follow-up action which will probably be needed even if it is not directly identifiable;

(c) Co-operation with other sources of funds has not always gone smoothly. It is nevertheless necessary to seek co-financing in a much more systematic manner to ensure the "critical mass" which is essential for major operations. A list of projects in the pipeline is included in the new programme, and it is intended to prepare complete project documents as a basis for active efforts towards the mobilization of funds;

(d) The planning and preparation of projects require close attention and judgements which may sometimes be difficult. It is vital to ensure the proper staffing of projects by stipulating the roles to be played by experts, volunteers and national trained personnel. There is no general formula for the optimum mix. It is also important not only to estimate the requirements accurately but also to assess the capacity of the Government to provide national reciprocal arrangements in personnel, materials and running costs.

#### B. New programme proposal

42. The new programme is the outcome of a joint exercise by the Government and UNDP, conducted in parallel with the drafting of the Economic and Financial Recovery Programme, and reflects the development priorities and strategies of the PREF. The thrust of the proposal was determined bilaterally by the Government and UNDP. United Nations specialized agencies have been or will be chiefly responsible for drawing up projects with the Government in consultation with the UNDP representative's office.

43. The financial resources available amount to \$14,308,866. Most of this (\$12,955,000) come from the IPF (\$13,475,000, which has had to be reduced by \$520,000 to compensate for funds withdrawn for activities during the current cycle). The remainder of the funding package, \$1,353,866, will come from operational funds under the authority of the Administrator and from the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

44. The programme is expected to be supported by supplementary funds. These fall into three categories:

(a) The United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) is at various levels of advancement in negotiations with donors on funding for projects which will promote the objectives of the programme;

(b) The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) will be providing concurrent assistance for the same purposes, but the size and specific applications of the UNCDF contribution have yet to be determined;

(c) A number of donors have expressed an interest in principle in co-funding certain projects to be partly funded from the IPF;

(d) Finally, it has been decided to draw up a list of projects in the pipeline including eight priority projects which could not be included in the programme for lack of resources. The total cost of these is estimated at \$13,265,641. External funding for these projects will be actively and persistently sought by UNDP.

45. The programme is focused on three development objectives:

(a) Increasing the country's level of food self-sufficiency, with seven projects to promote farm output and small-scale fishing plus a programmed reserve;

(b) Restoring the rural environment, which covers six projects concerned with desert encroachment control, the promotion of rural employment and rural water supplies, plus a programmed reserve. Two of these projects will be funded through UNSO;

(c) Enhancing the country's capacity for economic management with seven projects plus a programmed reserve.

The resources devoted to these three objectives amount to 46.5 per cent, 33.6 per cent and 11.8 per cent respectively of the total resources for the programme.

46. The programme includes three small-scale activities not associated with these objectives, together accounting for 4.5 per cent of total resources. The activities concerned are principally the continuation and completion of assistance currently in progress. An amount of \$500,000 (3.5 per cent) has been placed in an unprogrammed reserve for unforeseen requirements associated with the main projects.

47. The choice of the three development objectives targeted by the programme is readily explained by the country's principal problems, the Government's action priorities as set forth in its recovery programme (see especially paras. 4, 5, 14, 18, 22 and 23) and the decision to concentrate assistance on a small number of objectives and sectors. It should be borne in mind that Mauritania's present problems are not by any means of recent origin and at least the first two objectives figure prominently (although described differently) in the current

programme. Some important activities have begun during the present cycle and must be continued.

#### Increasing self-sufficiency in food

48. Farm output. Rain-fed crops have become so unpredictable that the Government has decided to concentrate on irrigated and seasonal-flooding crops. The dams at Manantali and Diama being built under an OMVS programme will be in operation shortly, allowing the waters in the river to be controlled. There are 135,000 hectares of land that can be irrigated, chiefly by the river, but only 8,200 hectares have been developed to date. In the period 1986-1988 the Government is planning to rehabilitate 2,600 hectares of irrigated land, bring 2,000 extra hectares of land under irrigation yearly and develop 2,000 hectares of crops behind dams every year in the interior of the country. Given average rainfall for recent years, it is hoped that 40 per cent of grain requirements can be met in 1988 (as against less than 10 per cent between 1982 and 1984). It should be possible to satisfy 20 and 50 per cent respectively of the demand for vegetables and milk.

49. The objectives presented here obviously represent only one phase in the development of agriculture, which will continue in years to come. The PREF includes a study on a master plan for the Senegal delta and a great many studies on the development of new areas of the country. The Government has identified a number of accompanying measures that must be taken to permit the degree of development it is seeking, including the introduction of decentralized farm credit, expanded agricultural extension services and guaranteed availability of inputs. UNDP will help, under this programme, with some of these accompanying measures.

50. Fishing. Mauritanian waters are some of the world's richest in fish. A new fisheries policy was drawn up in 1979; as a result the value of exports more than doubled between 1981 and 1984 and now represents roughly 50 per cent of all export earnings. Growth has taken place chiefly in industrial fishing for export. UNDP, at the Government's request, has directed its assistance in recent years towards the development of small-scale fishing in order to diversify the sources of protein available to the population and provide a partial substitute for meat, for meat supplies threaten to go on varying with rainfall. Small-scale fishing nets 12,000 tons of fish annually; half of this is factory processed and the other half is absorbed by the local market. An FAO study put potential consumption in the year 2000 at 37,000 tons. Nouakchott's fishermen have been organized into co-operatives, a joint marketing company has been set up and a refrigerated warehouse has been built.

#### Projects

51. Project MAU/83/001 (seed production, research and development, phase II), now in progress with co-financing from the Netherlands, contributed to the recent establishment of a seed centre which is organizing and co-ordinating the decentralized production of seed. This assistance will continue, under a new phase of the project, throughout the duration of the programme in order to ensure that sufficient seed is produced for the country's needs. The importance of the project was amply demonstrated during the 1985 planting season when it proved impossible to

buy the seed required although funds were available. The aim is also to produce high-quality seeds, since imported seed is often inferior. Good varieties have been identified for some crops, including rice, but it is clear that seed production and applied agronomic research need to be co-ordinated. The evaluation of project MAU/83/001, due by mid-1986, will be followed by the formulation of a second phase to begin in January 1987. Total costs of the new project have been put at \$3 million for the five years of the programme, and half of this sum (\$1,500,000) has been reserved under the programme. In other words, the second phase also calls for joint financing. Two donors have expressed an interest.

52. Most peasants in Mauritania do not get technical advice. Agricultural extension services are scattered and lack the resources to conduct a coherent programme. The purpose of project MAU/84/003 (Agricultural extension) is gradually to build up a national extension service which can meet all the country's requirements. The current phase, which ends in 1988, is chiefly concerned with institutional and training problems and the formulation of programmes, which will be tested in areas representative of the main systems of production. The introduction of an efficient service throughout the country will evidently require assistance beyond the capacity of UNDP. The funds set aside under this programme, \$2 million, were calculated to ensure (a) the continuation and completion of the current phase (\$549,783 approved for activities during this programming period); and (b) basic assistance during phase II. There are plans to invite participation by other donors in the progressive introduction of services throughout the country beginning in 1988.

53. In 1982, UNDP and UNSO began to help the Government with the introduction of an Agricultural statistical service (MAU/80/996). The service was used for the first time in autumn 1985 to monitor and evaluate the harvest. The UNDP project (basically one technical adviser) will continue to the end of 1988 to introduce, try out and consolidate various activities within the service. The sum of \$300,000 has been earmarked for this purpose. It is possible that the renewal of UNSO assistance, which has been chiefly concerned with the conduct of specific studies in the field (grant from Italy) may also be proposed.

54. Even simple farming and household tools are often imported although in many parts of the country there are groups of craftsmen perfectly capable of manufacturing tools. These craftsmen often work in difficult conditions with inadequate equipment and no access to high quality raw materials. One small item under a project now in progress. Development of handicrafts (MAU/80/001), revealed opportunities for improving the productivity and income of craftsmen with fairly limited resources. The sum of \$1 million was allocated for beginning a wider-ranging series of activities including workshop improvement, training and the provision of tools. Co-funding is sought for this project in order to permit the widest possible geographical coverage. It has been possible to identify some donors who are interested in principle.

55. The Ministry of Rural Development, which is responsible for managing a very large amount of the investment under the PREF, is short of high-level staff. A planning unit gradually set up with assistance from the World Bank and France will help with long-term planning but will not be able to tackle some issues, such as

land tenure and rural legislation, in depth. These were taken up by a high-level expert under project MAU/80/012 (Assistance to the Ministry of Rural Development) which will end in mid-1986. A second phase, lasting two years and with more specific goals than MAU/80/012, is planned: 18 months of this, for which \$250,000 has been earmarked, come under this programme.

56. Since 1984, UNDP's technical assistance has concentrated on woodworking. Under project MAU/84/012 (Fishing boat construction and repair) training is being offered in the repair of small fishing boats and in the experimental local construction of improved small boats. The Saudi-funded construction of a new boat-building and repair shop has been completed in Nouakchott, and the UNDP expert has been put in charge of the shop for now. The programme calls for \$800,000 in technical assistance for small-scale fishing. This will be used entirely for the woodworking project until assistance is no longer vital, but at present it is difficult to say when that will be. The remaining funds will then be programmed in the light of new priorities. For the present, \$250,000 is earmarked for the continuation of the current project, and the remainder (\$550,000) is being put in a programmed reserve.

#### Linkages

57. Increased food production is a common objective of many programmes and projects, including investment projects in the various regions. Here we will mention mainly those directly related to the immediate goals of projects under this programme. It should nevertheless be stressed that five of the six UNDP projects concerned with the second programme objective (restoration of the rural environment) will also help, in various degrees, to promote farm output, and there will be close co-operation among several of the projects under this programme.

58. Activities under this programme will be supported by the UNDP regional programme for Africa, especially through UNDP assistance to OMVS and the West African Rice Development Association (WARDA).

59. The development of agricultural extension will be supported by bilateral assistance which will raise training capacity from 15 to 100 students per class. The development of improved seeds will be supported by two applied research projects, funded by the United States and France.

60. Finally, it should be noted that the Government and a number of donors, notably WFP, plan to make extensive use of the revenue from selling food aid to promote food production within the country. The aim is to establish a joint fund to which food aid donors will pledge to make specified contributions every year. This will make it possible to plan large-scale activities in the context of assured, replenishable funding. Operations may take the form of support for the Government's agricultural policy and/or directly productive projects. A draft decree to establish the fund is currently under study.

#### Programmed reserve

61. A reserve fund of \$1,360,000 has been programmed for the first programme objective. It comprises three parts:

(a) An allocation of \$550,000 for small-scale fishing (see para. 56);

(b) An allocation of \$360,000 to secure support funding for agricultural activities around the 28 boreholes drilled with UNSO assistance. The nature and extent of this assistance have still to be defined. If not all the funds are used or other funding is obtained, the reserve could be reallocated to other activities promoting agricultural production;

(c) An allocation of \$450,000 to cover any UNDP funding of projects in the pipeline.

#### Restoration of the rural environment

62. UNDP activities will be conducted on three fronts: the fight against desertification, the promotion of rural employment, and rural water management.

63. The fight against desertification. The desert is spreading rapidly - several kilometres per year - in Mauritania. Typically, the process begins with the disappearance of the plant cover and continues, often in direct consequence, with the formation of shifting sand dunes. The sand invades roads (making maintenance extremely costly), houses and crops. Entire palm groves have vanished under the sand in the north of the country; some crops are even under threat very close to the River Senegal. One of the chief reasons for this has been the low rainfall since the early 1970s which has not only restricted the growth of grasses but delayed the regeneration of the tree cover. The problem has been aggravated by cattle, which have had to concentrate on smaller areas of pastureland, and human demand for firewood which greatly exceeds the natural rate of growth of the country's trees.

64. Not being able to control the rainfall, the Government has to try to tackle this situation by altering patterns of firewood and pastureland use and by protecting land and developing firewood supplies through afforestation. Tree planting is constantly encouraged by the authorities wherever there is water, to increase wood production vis-à-vis demand but especially, to protect settlements and crops against sand and desertification. Saplings are provided free of charge, the mass education institutions organize village plantations, and it is becoming more and more commonplace for farming projects to include an afforestation segment.

65. Promotion of rural employment. For several years the Mauritanian Government has been trying to encourage the public at large to take a greater part in political life and national construction and development efforts. The declining living standards caused by drought, when there are limited administrative and budgetary resources to redress the situation, make it especially important to mobilize and organize the country's underutilized productive forces. Mass education institutions (structures d'éducation des masses - SEMs) were established in 1982 and rapidly became the principal vehicles for mobilization and organization. An impressive number of successful community projects (schools, dispensaries, small roads, dams, tree plantations, etc.) has followed the establishment of these institutions.



66. Nevertheless, popular migration and the fact that a large sector of the population still needs free food aid posed problems which exceeded the capacity of the educational institutions. In 1985 the Government adopted as official policy a "food for work" programme to develop the production potential of individual communities, reduce employment and gradually eliminate handouts of free foodstuffs to people capable of working.

67. Rural water management. Providing the public with drinking water requires extensive effort over a long period. In rural areas only 15 per cent of the population has access to clean water; 30 per cent of all villages lack properly equipped wells and obtain their supplies from ponds or small polluted wells. Efforts to meet the demand for water are hampered by the limited resources available, poor management techniques, the widely scattered population, and under-replenishment of surface aquifers because of the shortage of rainfall. Earlier water projects are falling into decline for lack of maintenance and repair or are ceasing to function as water levels drop. The same is true of herd-watering points and facilities constructed to hold back water for agricultural crops. Action by the Government initially took the form of legislation, including a water code governing the use of water sources. There was some intensive programming, and 26 per cent of the recovery plan is now going for research and investment in the water management sphere. A large proportion of these funds has already been secured. As regards rural water supplies on which UNDP is currently financing two projects, the Government hopes to double the proportion of the population with access to clean water by 1988, from 15 per cent to 30 per cent.

### Projects

68. In 1984, UNDP, UNSO and UNCDF embarked on a joint effort to identify the most economical and appropriate techniques and approaches for halting the advance of the sand dunes (MAU/83/003 - UNSO/DES/MAU/82/001 - Dune stabilization and fixing). This was basically an experimental project on 15 sites, although a number of communities benefited under it. An outline strategy and a national programme of action were drawn up as part of the project. The programme, which includes the creation of facilities for its implementation, comprises several segments and would require a total of \$23.5 million from a variety of sources for complete execution. It is currently under consideration. UNDP will contribute \$1,400,000 towards the second phase of the programme.

69. The Nature Protection Department (DPN) of the Ministry of Rural Development is responsible for soil and pastureland conservation, reforestation and wildlife protection. The campaign against sand encroachment is also part of its responsibilities. The main aim of one project - Institutional support for DPN - is to expand the Department, notably its research and programming office, so that it can cope with increasingly extensive tasks. UNSO is expected to sign a funding agreement with a bilateral donor for this project, which is budgeted at \$862,000.

70. Consumption of firewood greatly exceeds the natural regeneration of the tree cover. The main objective of a project supporting the national programme to reduce firewood consumption and distribute improved stoves in rural areas is to reduce

82. The sum of \$100,000 has been reserved for the completion in 1987 of the project to computerize the customs services (MAU/83/005) which has already yielded very good results in terms of customs receipts. The project is supplying computers and auxiliary equipment and offers the necessary training with the help of consultants.

83. The project entitled "Trade information" (MAU/85/003) is part of the effort to develop a trade information exchange system within the countries of the West African Economic Community (CEAO) and ensure that the information is used sensibly in each country. The sum of \$100,000 has been set aside for completion of the project during the forthcoming cycle.

84. A total of \$300,000 has been set aside to cover applications for fellowships and seminars during the cycle.

85. Under logistical and administrative support for the programme (MAU/79/009), \$300,000 has been set aside for the provision of common services to all the projects covered by the programme.

#### Linkages

86. See paragraph 22.

#### Programmed reserve

87. An allocation of \$135,000 has been made to cover possible contributions towards the funding of projects in the pipeline.

#### Non-objective linked projects

88. This category covers two allocations for the continuation and completion of activities in progress, and one new project which is considered particularly useful although it does not fall within the specific objectives of the programme. The three projects together account for 4.5 per cent of total resources.

89. The Centre for Basic and Advanced Vocational Training in Nouakchott (MAU/77/004) has been receiving UNDP assistance since 1978. The training normally offered by the Centre at the moment covers the following disciplines: secretarial work, accounting, car maintenance, building design, plumbing, electrical and mechanical work. The Centre's activities largely comprise refresher courses offered by request and with money from businesses; with this kind of course, based on specific and immediate demand, the Centre can venture into areas not covered by its normal curriculum. The current project was supposed to end in 1986. Owing, however, to the fact that the Centre is currently expanding and professional training in general will be subject to reorganization, it has been decided to allocate \$400,000 for activities so far unspecified in the sphere of professional training.

90. In the space of a few years the National Centre for Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation (CNORF), with assistance from UNDP and other donors, has become one

of the best in Africa; 4,690 patients were treated in 1984, and 430 were equipped with orthopaedic devices. The project, MAU/80/001, was to end in late 1986, but the programme provides \$150,000 for isolated cases where support is needed to sustain past accomplishments.

91. The new project - "Technical advice to industrial enterprises" - for which \$100,000 has been set aside will provide short-term advisory services on dealing with specific problems in individual enterprises. These may relate to the replacement of equipment, the supply of raw materials, manufacturing techniques, product design or entry into new markets. The form which action will take will be decided as specific needs are discovered, and advisory services will be given by consultants specializing in the branches of industry concerned.

#### C. Unprogrammed reserve

92. The unprogrammed reserve is \$500,000. It will be used for unforeseen requirements associated with projects under the programme.

Annex

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

I. ACTUAL RESOURCES TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT FOR PROGRAMMING

A.	<u>UNDP-administered sources</u>	\$	\$
	Third cycle IPF balance	(520 000)	
	Fourth cycle IPF	13 475 000	
	Subtotal IPF		12 955 000
	Special Measures Fund for Least Developed Countries		
	Special programme resources		
	Government cost-sharing		
	Third-party cost-sharing		
	Operational funds under the authority of the Administrator	1 352 866	
	UNDP special trust funds		
	Subtotal, UNDP non-IPF funds		1 353 866
B.	<u>Other sources</u>		
	Funds from other United Nations agencies or organizations firmly committed as a result of the country programme exercise		
	Parallel financing from non-United Nations sources		
	Subtotal, other sources		
	TOTAL ACTUAL RESOURCES TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT FOR PROGRAMMING		14 308 866

II. USE OF RESOURCES

	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>
Ongoing projects	2 649 783	
New project proposals	9 414 083	
Programmed reserve	1 745 000	
Subtotal, Programmed resources		13 808 866
Unprogrammed reserve		500 000
TOTAL USE OF RESOURCES		14 308 866

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