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UNFPA

UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR POPULATION ACTIVITIES

PROPOSED PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

Recommendation by the Executive Director

Assistance to the Government of the Congo

Support for a comprehensive population programme

Proposed UNFPA assistance: \$1.9 million, of which \$1.2 million is to be committed from UNFPA's regular resources. If UNFPA's funding situation permits, the balance of up to \$0.7 million will be committed by UNFPA. If and to the extent this is not the case, UNFPA will seek to cover the shortfall from other sources, including multi-bilateral sources

Estimated value of the Government's contribution: To be determined

Duration: Four years

Estimated starting date: January 1987

Executing agencies: Government of the Congo  
United Nations  
International Labour Organisation (ILO)  
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)  
World Health Organization (WHO)

Government co-ordinating agency: Ministry of Planning

## CONGO

Demographic facts

Population by sex		Population density (/sq. km.) .	5
Total (in 1000) .....	1,740	Average annual change	
Male (in 1000) .....	858	Population increase (in 1000)	51
Female (in 1000) .....	882	Births (in 1000) .....	83
Sex ratio (/100 females) .....	97.2	Deaths (in 1000) .....	32
Population in year 2000 (in 1000)	2,643	Net migration (in 1000) .....	0
Population by age group		Rate of annual change	
Age 0-14 (in 1000) .....	759	Population change total (%) .	2.73
Age 15-64 (in 1000) .....	922	Urban (%) .....	4.1
Age 65 + (in 1000) .....	59	Rural (%) .....	1.8
Age 0-14 (percentage) .....	43.6	Crude birth rate (/1000) ....	44.4
Age 15-64 (percentage) .....	53.0	Crude death rate (/1000) ....	17.2
Age 65 + (percentage) .....	3.4	Natural increase (/1000) ....	27.2
Age indicators		Net migration (/1000) .....	0.0
Median age .....	18.2	Fertility and mortality	
Dependency: age 0-14 .....	82.3	Total fertility rate .....	5.99
Dependency: age 65 + .....	6.3	Completed family size .....	N/A
Dependency: total .....	88.7	Gross reproduction rate .....	2.95
Youth: 15-24 (in 1000) .....	323	Net reproduction rate .....	2.13
Women: 15-49 (in 1000) .....	399	General fertility rate (/1000)	194
Urban-rural population		Child-woman ratio .....	N/A
Urban population (in 1000) ....	687	Infant mortality rate (/1000)	73
Rural population (in 1000) ....	1,053	Life expectancy: male .....	46.9
Per cent urban (%) .....	39.5	Life expectancy: female .....	50.2
Per cent rural (%) .....	60.5	Life expectancy: total .....	48.5
Agricultural population density		GNP per capita	
(/hectare of arable land) .....	0.80	(U.S. dollars, 1984) .....	1,140

Sources: Area and population density on arable land: derived from Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO Production Yearbook 1980; gross national product per capita: World Bank, World Development Report 1986; completed family size: Noreen Goldman and John Hobcraft, "Birth Histories", in Comparative Studies, No. 17, (International Statistical Institute: Voorburg), 1982; all other data: Population Division, United Nations Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, World Population Prospects, Estimates and Projections as Assessed in 1984 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.XIII.3) - "population by sex" through "life expectancy: total" as of 1985-1990.

## I. SUMMARY

1. The United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) proposes to support a comprehensive population programme in the amount of \$1.9 million over a four-year period, starting January 1987, to assist the Government of the Congo to achieve its population and development objectives. Should resources not become available to UNFPA for the funding of the entire programme, UNFPA proposes to commit \$1.2 million from its regular resources. If UNFPA's funding situation permits, the balance of up to \$0.7 million will be provided by UNFPA. If and to the extent this is not possible, UNFPA will seek to cover the shortfall from other sources, including multi-bilateral sources. The programme takes into account the recommendations of the needs assessment mission of 1984 and the lessons from the 1973-1986 period. The Government has decided on the establishment and development of the institutional infrastructure needed for the formulation of a national population policy as its first priority. It proposes to create a national population commission and a population unit to serve as the Commission's secretariat. The UNFPA programme will also include projects in maternal and child health and family planning (MCH/FP), population education in school and through rural radio, women in development, prevention of infertility and civil registration.

2. All projects under the proposed programme, as in all UNFPA-assisted programmes, will be undertaken in accordance with the principles and objectives of the World Population Plan of Action, that is, population policies should be consistent with internationally and nationally recognized human rights of individual freedom, justice and the survival of national, regional and minority groups (para. 14 (d)), respect for human life is basic to all human societies (para. 14 (e)) and all couples and individuals have the basic right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information, education and means to do so (para. 14 (f)).

## II. BACKGROUND

3. The first national population census in the Congo was undertaken in 1974 with UNFPA assistance. The first census showed that the relatively sparse population was unevenly distributed, highly urban (39.5 per cent) and concentrated along the axis known as "Congo-Océan", following the railway between Brazzaville and the port city of Pointe-Noire. The fertility rate (192 per 1,000) and the mortality rate (18.6 per 1,000) were high and life expectancy at birth low (46 years). Women constituted a majority of the rural working population, implying considerable emigration of young men.

4. The socio-economic development plan for 1982-1986 was the first to take into account population factors. Given that the sex and age imbalances in the rural population, their economic consequences and the urban concentration along the Congo-Océan axis were especially worrisome, the plan stipulated the recovery and management of space for economic and human use as one of its objectives. The mortality rate was also of primary concern, and the main health objective was thus to reduce this overall rate and, in particular, the rate of infant mortality (124 per 1,000). On the other hand, population growth was not considered excessive, given the relatively low population density.

5. A second population census was taken in January 1985. Its preliminary results show a population of just under 2 million, indicating a growth rate of 3.48 per cent between 1974 and 1985, almost one percentage point higher than the 2.65 estimated by the United Nations. These preliminary results show that the urban population now stands at 52.5 per cent of the total and that the ratio of men to women in the rural population is 47:53. The possible impact of these rates will have to be studied to determine the need for policy actions not previously contemplated. The preliminary results also confirm the persistence of high infant mortality.

6. The population issues which are of main concern to the Government are adolescent pregnancies and infertility. Studies carried out in 1983 and 1984 by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), revealed that pregnancy is common among adolescents. Half of the young women in Brazzaville, for example, have had their second child by age 20, and 22 per cent of the children of female students at one Brazzaville secondary school had already entered the school system themselves. Modern methods of contraception are not used by the young either because they are not aware of the availability of services at MCH/FP centres, or they are reluctant to be seen seeking counsel and services by the older patients at the centres. About one third of adolescent pregnancies are voluntarily terminated. The infertility rate among women is estimated at 16.5-19 per cent, and the way to deal with this problem, which is common to countries of central Africa, is one of Government's priorities.

7. In view of the results of the 1974 census and the preliminary results of the second in 1985, there is a pressing need for an overall policy that will address the problems of uneven population distribution, rapid urbanization and depopulation of the countryside, high population growth, unwanted pregnancies, particularly among the school population, and their consequences in terms of education and work opportunities for women and morbidity and mortality among women and children. The Government attaches first priority to the development of the necessary institutions for the study and design of an appropriate population policy.

### III. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS ASSISTANCE

8. The Congo received assistance totalling \$3.1 million from UNFPA in the period 1973-1986. This assistance covered MCH/FP, population information, education and communication (IEC), data collection and special programmes. The projects implemented have contributed to the establishment of a reliable data base, have created awareness of population issues and needs and have helped to build a human resources infrastructure through training.

#### Maternal and child health and family planning

9. Development of maternal and child health and family planning services. In 1980, the Governing Council approved an MCH/FP project totalling \$2 million. Expenditures up to the end of 1981 amounted to only \$0.2 million. In view of this slow implementation rate and owing to UNFPA's financial constraints at the time, the balance of \$1.8 million was reduced to \$1.2 million in accordance with the

review and reassessment of the UNFPA programme, 1982-1985. Eventually, expenditures for 1982-1985 amounted to \$0.6 million and allocations for 1986 to \$0.2 million. The remaining balance of \$0.4 million against the reduced amounts under the review and reassessment is subsumed under the country programme which is submitted in this document. This project, executed by WHO, has contributed to the creation of a permanent, albeit still limited, service centre infrastructure and to raising awareness and providing skills in family planning for a broad range of health and community development personnel. Six pilot MCH/FP centres were created covering five of the nine regions. Eleven seminars have been organized for nurses, school teachers, family planning consultants and MCH/FP centre officials. Ten long-term and nine short-term MCH/FP fellowships were funded by UNFPA. Family planning awareness has been promoted through women's organizations. A sociological survey with 2,300 interviewers was initiated to study popular attitudes towards family planning. The statistics revealed slow but constant progress in the spread of family planning services, especially in the urban areas. Over all, however, project achievements will be difficult to evaluate for lack of data to measure services and results. One of the main obstacles to project implementation was the discrepancy between the number of staff actually attached to the project and the number foreseen by the initial project document as well as frequent personnel movements. The project has also failed to serve the needs of the young, as family planning counselling is first offered at a fixed point in post-partum care. A recent survey also shows that the awareness-creation activities have achieved their goal only partially; only 32 per cent of population is aware of the availability of family planning services in their communities. The shortcomings of the first phase will be corrected in second phase, which was approved in 1986. UNFPA assistance to date has totalled \$500,000.

#### Population information, education and communication

10. Promotion of women and the family in the Pool and Koukouya Plateau regions. The project, started in 1976, aimed to use the infrastructure of the rural development project in this region to carry out activities to promote and improve family welfare. Activities included investigation and analyses of attitudes and aspirations concerning the family and its well-being and intervention for education and the promotion of women. The project was considered successful but in 1981 UNFPA assistance was suspended because of financial difficulties. Reorganization of the project's co-ordinating ministry and lack of Government counterpart funds made it impossible to accept a later request for the continuation of the project which was taken over by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1984. However, some remaining UNFPA funds are still being used for training activities. Total assistance to this project, executed by ILO, amounted to \$522,616.

#### Basic data collection and analysis

11. First population and housing census. The project was initiated in 1973 to assist the Government in taking its first population census and processing the results. UNFPA provided assistance for census operations and activities, including the services of a census expert, the costs of local salaries and equipment. The enumeration was completed in April 1974, but as analysis of the census results was delayed, the project was completed only in 1980. Through it, reliable demographic

data were made available for the first time. UNFPA support for this project, executed by the United Nations, amounted to \$420,110.

12. Second population and housing census. This project started in 1982. The census enumeration was delayed twice because of internal political problems but finally took place in January 1985. The census operation met with many difficulties, primarily owing to shortcomings in project planning. The personnel requirements, particularly for the coding and processing phase, were underestimated. The project faced delays in the acquisition of computers and in the Government's transfer of equipment from other users to the project. In the end, however, these difficulties were overcome. Provisional results were published in 1986 and the data processing will be completed in 1987. UNFPA assistance amounting to \$575,466 has been provided for the services of consultants and a data-processing expert, training, local personnel costs and equipment. The project is executed by the Government and the United Nations.

13. Improvement of the civil registration system. The project was initiated in 1976 to assist the Government by providing an expert to study the existing system and develop a plan of action for a national programme in order to improve collection of basic demographic data. The civil registration system was established in a limited pilot region on an experimental basis, and will eventually be applied to the rest of the country. The project faced institutional difficulties and had to be suspended in 1982 although some activities were continued by the Government beyond the end of the project. A national civil registration directorate, established in 1984, will provide the institutional framework for future project follow-up. UNFPA committed \$526,354 for this project executed by the United Nations.

#### Other external assistance

14. The Congo received population-related assistance from a number of international organizations, bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations. UNICEF funded MCH/FP services within the primary health programme in one district in 1985-1986 and pursued an expanded programme of immunization. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has been involved in a project on women's participation in sanitary development. The WHO programme for 1984-1987 was comprised of nine projects supporting health management, primary health care, health information and education, research, immunization, leprosy control and MCH/FP.

15. Canada has an ongoing project of research on customary law and the family which has helped in the elaboration of a new family code. Cuba provides two complete health teams of 11 and 8 members to the hospitals of Nkayi and Gamboma respectively. China has constructed the hospital in Owando and provides medical personnel. France helps in the control of endemic diseases, the administration of social welfare centres and sanitation and has provided technical assistance to the census project. It disbursed \$3,702,000 in 1985. The Swedish International Development Authority has committed \$1,330,000 for immunization and primary health care. It also supports the Congolese Evangelical Church's aid programme to rural mothers and children. The United States Agency for International Development

(USAID) co-operates with UNICEF, WHO and France in the expanded programme of immunization. In addition, USAID funds primary health care and nutritional education both directly and through the Co-operative for American Relief Everywhere, Inc. (CARE). 1980-1988 allocations totalled \$4,639,000. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) has established the Blanche Gomes MCH centre and provided medical personnel and fellowships.

16. In addition, the Christian Family Movement has a counselling programme for women which promotes use of the rhythm method. It is funded by the International Federation for Family Life Promotion which has also provided training. The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) provided contraceptives in 1984 and, since 1985, has provided training, studies of family health problems and provision of equipment. The Johns Hopkins Program for International Education in Gynecology and Obstetrics has provided training in health and reproduction. The Salvation Army is involved in the expanded programme of immunization.

#### IV. FINDINGS OF THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT MISSION

17. The needs assessment mission of 1984 recommended that a programme of UNFPA assistance should be developed to improve the health of mothers and children and promote the use of family planning; to establish a population planning unit as an institutional basis for the formulation of a population policy; to support the second population census with a view to strengthening national planning and assisting the formulation of a population policy; to promote awareness on population matters and family planning by expanding information and education in school and through mass media and mass organizations; and to promote the participation of women in the development process and to increase their benefits from the results.

#### V. PROPOSED PROGRAMME 1987-1990

18. The proposed UNFPA programme in the amount of \$1.9 million for the period 1987-1990 would respond to the needs identified by the 1984 mission as well as meet Government priorities. The long-term objective of the proposed programme is to develop the country's capacity to formulate, implement and evaluate a national population policy.

##### Maternal and child health and family planning

19. Development of MCH/FP services. The Government's goal in integrating MCH/FP into the primary health system is to improve family life and the health of the population. Family planning, in terms of child-spacing, is a means to protect the health of both mother and child. The Government also intends to promote family planning services to deal with the crucial problem of adolescent pregnancy. Assistance will be provided for the creation of eight new MCH/FP centres and the number of regions with MCH/FP centres will be increased from five to nine so as to cover the whole country. The project will attempt to develop a system to cater to the needs of adolescents through the establishment of specialized family planning

centres for adolescents. The training programme will include establishing an MCH/FP training centre, training abroad for project personnel and the organization of workshops and seminars. One of its main objectives is to establish a system for gathering and analysing data on MCH/FP services through training of Ministry of Health and MCH/FP centre staff. Greater emphasis will be given to sex education and family planning awareness-creation, two areas which have been identified by the Government as highest priority. UNFPA proposes to commit \$600,000 to the project. WHO would be the executing agency.

20. Prevention of infertility. The Government considers infertility one of the crucial population issues. This project proposes to establish a centre for infertility studies with the objective of designing a strategy to deal with conjugal infertility. Project activities would include technical assistance, training abroad and locally, study of increases in infertility and its causes and design of a research programme. Study and research activities will be undertaken through the existing network of MCH/FP centres and hospitals and through the National Laboratory of Public Health. Total UNFPA proposed assistance amounts to \$280,000. The executing agency would be WHO.

#### Population information, education and communication

21. Population education in school. With the objective of integrating sex and family life education into formal school programmes, UNFPA assistance will be provided for the elaboration of education programmes, production of education material, training of teachers and introduction of sex and family life education in the school curricula. The ultimate goal of the project would be the institutionalization of population education in the school system. UNFPA assistance in the amount of \$250,000 would cover technical assistance, expendable and audio-visual equipment, local training, training abroad and the production of teaching materials. UNESCO would be the executing agency.

22. Population education through rural radio. The rural radio is a medium with good experience in awareness-creation among the rural population and, among the mass media in the Congo, it has the greatest influence. The overall objective of the project is to promote family well-being through the dissemination of information on MCH/FP, nutrition and birth-spacing. The activities of the project will include training abroad and locally for rural radio staff in content development and programme production. The project activities will be co-ordinated with the MCH/FP project for which a new mass media IEC strategy must be developed. Assistance in the amount of \$150,000 would cover technical assistance, training, audio and expendable equipment. UNESCO would be the executing agency.

#### Basic data collection and analysis

23. Second population and housing census. An additional amount of \$30,000 is to be provided to this project to complete the data processing and analysis of the 1984 census. The project results will be published in 1987. The project is being executed by the United Nations.



24. Improvement of the civil registration system. The demographic data base is to be strengthened by extending the improved system of data registration established in a pilot area to the whole country. This would complement the information available from censuses and permit the consideration of population dynamics in the planning process. The institutional infrastructure, which proved inappropriate during the execution of the pilot project, has been changed since 1984 when the National Civil Registration Directorate was created within the Ministry of Territorial Administration and People's Power. Assistance in the amount of \$100,000 would be provided for local training, production of registers and manuals and data processing. The project would be executed by the United Nations.

#### Population policy formulation

25. Establishment of a Population Planning Unit. The Government is committed to creating a National Population Commission and a Population Unit centrally located at the Ministry of Planning in its Human Resources Directorate that will function as the Commission's secretariat. A project proposal has been formulated for a preparatory phase in which the juridical base would be developed, the Commission would be created, the personnel of the Population Unit would be trained and a project proposal will be prepared for the development of the Unit's activities. The Population Unit would undertake a series of studies leading to the formulation of a national population policy to be promulgated by the National Population Commission. The Commission would then co-ordinate the implementation and evaluation of the population policy. The creation of this Commission and the Unit would also facilitate co-ordination of the new IEC programme designed to support acceptance and implementation of a population policy and to sensitize and inform the population about individual projects, such as MCH/FP. The research programme proposed by the Government includes studies on interaction between socio-economic factors and fertility, migration, infant mortality and a retrospective study on population dynamics during the pre-statistical period. The programme will be implemented in co-operation with the university. UNFPA assistance in the amount of \$340,000 would be provided for technical assistance, training abroad and locally, awareness-creation seminars for Government officials, support for the research programme, printing costs and expendable and data-processing equipment. The United Nations would be the executing agency.

#### Women, population and development

26. Integration of women in the development process. Women play an active role in the Congo. The Union of Congolese Women, a national organization which co-ordinates activities related to women at the national level, supports an ambitious programme of training, awareness-creation activities, studies, education and information. The proposed project aims to establish a research, documentation and training centre located administratively within the Union of Congolese Women. As some studies of women's needs have already been undertaken in the Congo, the centre will take an inventory of existing information in the country and abroad and design research studies on the situation and needs of women in the Congolese milieu. The training programme on family welfare and family planning for community workers and motivators will be the main focus of project activities. The Centre will serve also as the co-ordinating unit for related activities undertaken by

other ministries and mass organizations. UNFPA assistance in the amount of \$150,000 would cover technical assistance, training locally and abroad, expendable and audio-visual equipment, documentation, materials and support for the research programme. ILO is to be the executing agency.

#### Monitoring and evaluation

27. The programme and its component projects will follow the revised UNFPA guidelines for monitoring and evaluation, including periodic country reviews with participation from the Government and UNFPA. As this is the first country programme in the Congo, special attention will be paid to monitoring and evaluating the contribution of individual projects to increasing the institutional capability in population matters (e.g. leadership, human and material resources, appropriate organizational set-up, etc.) and in particular to setting the basis for a population policy. These issues will be a priority item on the agenda of periodic country reviews. Moreover, each project formulated under this country programme will have a plan for its monitoring and evaluation. At the time of formulation it will be decided if any project requires a more elaborate evaluation exercise.

#### Financial summary

28. As indicated in paragraph 1, a programme of \$1.9 million is proposed, of which \$1.2 million will be provided from UNFPA's regular resources. This commitment of \$1.2 million would cover all projects but at a lower level, as indicated in the table below. If UNFPA's funding situation permits, the balance of up to \$0.7 million will be provided by UNFPA. If and to the extent this is not possible, UNFPA will seek to cover the shortfall from other sources, including multi-bilateral sources. The following table shows how the programme areas will accommodate these two levels of funding.

	<u>UNFPA regular resources</u>	<u>Other resources including multi- bilateral resources</u>	<u>Total</u>
	\$	\$	\$
Maternal and child health and family planning	470 000	410 000	880 000
Information, education and communication	290 000	110 000	400 000
Data collection and analysis	30 000	100 000	130 000
Population policy formulation	260 000	80 000	340 000
Women, population and development	150 000	-	150 000
Total	<u>1 200 000</u>	<u>700 000</u>	<u>1 900 000</u>

VI. RECOMMENDATION

29. The Executive Director recommends that the Governing Council:

(a) Approve the programme for the Congo in the amount of \$1.9 million for four years;

(b) Authorize the Executive Director to commit an amount of \$1.2 million from UNFPA's regular resources;

(c) Further authorize the Executive Director to provide the balance of up to \$0.7 million from UNFPA's regular resources, if such resources are available. If and to the extent they are not, further authorize the Executive Director to seek to cover the shortfall from other sources, including multi-bilateral sources;

(d) Authorize the Executive Director to allocate the funds and make appropriate arrangements with the Government of the Congo and with the executing agencies.

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