



**Executive Board of the
United Nations Development
Programme, the United Nations
Population Fund and the
United Nations Office
for Project Services**

Distr.: General
15 March 2011
English
Original: French

Annual session 2011

6 to 17 June 2011, New York

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

Country programmes and related matters

Draft country programme document for Gabon (2012-2016)

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I. Situation analysis

1. Gabon has an area of 267,667 km² with a population estimated in 2003 at 1.5 million inhabitants. The population is young, with 60 per cent under 25 years of age. At present, 80 per cent of the population is urban (see *Enquête gabonaise sur le suivi et l'évaluation de la pauvreté, 2005* (Gabonese survey for poverty evaluation and monitoring, 2005)) and is concentrated in the four main cities: Libreville, Port-Gentil, Owendo and Franceville. The petroleum industry alone accounts for 51.5 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP), 64 per cent of budget revenue and 82 per cent of export earnings.

2. Despite having a per capita GDP at purchasing power parity estimated at \$12,747 in 2008, one of the highest on the continent, Gabon's social indicators are uncharacteristic, paradoxically, presenting a poverty profile similar to that of low income countries.

3. The Third Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Progress Report notes that there is still a great deal of work to be done to achieve the goals. The report demonstrates that if current trends continue, the level of achievement of MDGs 1, 4, 5 and 6 will be very low. The poverty rate remains high at 33 per cent and statistics for health-related MDGs are worrisome, with an infant mortality rate of 91.4 per 1,000 and maternal mortality of 519 deaths per 100,000 live births (*Enquête démographie santé 2000* (Demographic and Health Survey 2000)). HIV/AIDS prevalence is not decreasing (5.2 per cent in 2009) and continues to represent a real threat to the country's development; moreover, 60 per cent of all infected adults are women, which poses a particular challenge in combating the pandemic. Malaria, the principal cause of hospitalization, is endemic: 40 per cent of children under 5 years of age and 71 per cent of all pregnant women suffer from the disease.

4. In his vision for society described as "Facing the Future with Confidence", the President of the Republic, elected in September 2009, has demonstrated his firm political commitment to coherent economic and social development based on economic diversification, local resource processing and shared growth.

5. There is, therefore, an urgent need to improve the business climate to promote and facilitate entrepreneurship. Given the richness and diversity of the country's resources, the opportunities are great. Yet, the cost of unskilled labour and weak infrastructures and institutions for promoting South-South and North-South public-private partnerships are drawbacks.

6. Efforts have been made to promote a green economy based on the conservation of environmental resources (the creation of 13 national parks), the development of legal management tools (forest, environmental and mining codes), and strategic frameworks and sectoral programmes (biodiversity, climate change, forestry and environment sectoral programme); nonetheless administrative capacities and institutional coordination are weak, thus putting the brakes on initiatives for sustainable development.

7. In brief, good economic and democratic governance and actions targeting the poorest populations are the missing links in any effort to bring into balance the country's level of overall wealth and its human development index. Given its comparative advantages, UNDP will focus its involvement on supporting national policies, strategies and plans of action to remove the impediments to development.

This approach will include support to strengthen the country's statistical, legal and judicial machinery, and its constitutional institutions so that they may play a role in overseeing the actions of the Government, local institutions and civil society that have a bearing on the decision-making and development processes. It will also take into account gender equality and equity. Through pilot initiatives, UNDP will also raise the investment needed to encourage achievement of the MDGs.

II. Past cooperation and lessons learned

8. **Achievement of the MDGs and poverty reduction:** The Growth Strategy and Poverty Reduction Document (DSCR) has raised considerable expectations by promoting the establishment of programmes and structural reforms to create wealth and employment, as well as a genuine policy for redistributing the benefits of growth. Unfortunately it is weakened by the lack of an operational institutional framework for implementation. Also, the fact that the national statistics machinery has not been able to provide fresh data has been one of the greatest obstacles to both planning and the monitoring and evaluation framework.

9. **Operational activities:** Initiatives begun as part of the Gabon programme for support to territorial and thematic networks of human development cooperation (ART GOLD) have fostered an environment that encourages community and local development, and the promotion of local governance. They have also been an incentive for completing the process of decentralization. Furthermore, the very positive results obtained in the pilot phase of the Shared Solid Waste Urban Management project (participation of the population in financing) have led the Government to extend the project to the entire territory.

10. There is a need for a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system to guide the conduct of the programme as a whole. In the future UNDP should step up assistance to the Government for the development and use of planning, monitoring and evaluation tools.

11. **Strengthening governance:** While the analyses and awareness-raising campaigns in the context of the good governance programme were initially viewed with apprehension, they have allowed the Government to identify the country's weaknesses in this area and to commit to the implementation of the Plan of Action, which is among the priorities of the new President of the Republic.

12. **Environment and sustainable development:** Initiatives undertaken in connection with the Second National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change have made for the integration of environment and sustainable development issues into comprehensive and sectoral national development strategies. In addition, a national committee on climate, chaired by the Head of State, has been set up. Awareness-raising campaigns launched in critical coastal erosion zones, including Mandji Island and Estuaire province, have led the Government to curb uncontrolled coastal sand mining, a human activity that exacerbates the negative impacts of rising sea levels.

13. A study on the limitation of timber exports and sustainable use of timber resources through a quota system has also served to inform the decisions taken by the Government in this regard in 2010. At the operational level, the Tri-National Dja-Odzala-Minkébé (TRIDOM) project has helped to solidify the basis for

cooperation among Gabon, Cameroon and Congo on transboundary biodiversity management.

14. **Gender:** UNDP and UNFPA supported the preparation of a national strategy for gender equality and equity which was adopted by the Government in February 2010. The implementation of the strategy should allow stark gender disparities and inequalities that persist in the country to be corrected.

15. **Lessons learned:** Promoting the accountability of community organizations and local authorities, and their involvement in the preparation and implementation of local development programmes, provides real opportunities to strengthen the process of decentralization of economic governance. On the other hand, late payment of counterpart funds for some projects is still an impediment to the achievement of the desired results.

16. **Combating disease:** Enhanced capacities to manage Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria projects have given the national partner an opportunity to assume responsibility for the management of funds. Community-based care and prevention-through-information campaigns, a 70-per-cent reduction in the cost of antiretroviral drugs and free treatment policies have strengthened the national response and, in particular, stabilized the HIV/AIDS seroprevalence rate.

III. Proposed programme

17. The country programme is based on the national priorities of Gabon, including: (a) strong, sustainable and diversified growth; (b) economic and democratic governance; (c) human and social development. The Programme spells out the contribution of UNDP to the achievement of the priorities set forth in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

18. In an effort to ensure that the per capita income of Gabon is reflected in the country's social indicators, UNDP envisions working on the strategic level to support the Government in the area of economic, democratic and environmental governance, and through pilot initiatives that will raise the necessary investments to promote the well-being of the population and the increased participation of all in growth.

19. **Contribution to strengthening economic, democratic and environmental governance:** The objective is to strengthen key institutions for the management of public affairs and to encourage South-South and North-South cooperation. The aim is: (a) to improve the national system for the production of statistical data by supporting the implementation of the National Statistical Development Strategy (SNDS) so as to provide quality data for monitoring and evaluation of development programmes; (b) to give the Government technical capacities and tools for forecasting and development planning; (c) to support institutions promoting the private sector; (d) to strengthen the peer review evaluation mechanism process and the capacities of institutions responsible for strengthening the rule of law; (e) to support the Government in respect of developing the natural heritage and adapting to climate change.

20. **Promotion of the well-being of the population and the increased participation of all in growth:** The objective is to enhance human development by stepping up existing efforts to achieve the MDGs. UNDP will help the Government

develop a plan to speed up progress towards the MDGs. Specifically, UNDP will contribute to the improvement of the people's standard of living in the three poorest provinces of Gabon, with particular attention to the empowerment of women. In addition, the Shared Solid Waste Urban Management project will be implemented in three other urban centres to improve living conditions through sanitation.

21. In both of these areas, the strategy aims at capacity-building and sustainability of results. Pursuing the objective of strengthening economic growth and diversifying the engines of growth that has been set by the Government will entail enhancing the effectiveness of institutions that promote the private sector. UNDP will also provide strategic support for a variety of activities that can create incentives to complete the process of decentralization.

22. Strategic partnerships will be forged with key decision-making institutions in the Government, the parliament and civil society to encourage the effective implementation of measures adopted, in particular in the social sectors. Gender mainstreaming will be emphasized, taking into account the policies and priorities set forth in the national gender strategy that has already been endorsed. The aim is to devise specific targeted actions and at the same time to integrate a gender perspective in the preparation and implementation of support programmes.

IV. Programme management, monitoring and evaluation

4.1 Programme management

23. National execution remains the preferred programme implementation modality, the aim being to strengthen the country's capacities in the areas of management, monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes selected.

24. Joint programmes will play an increasingly important role in continuing the work of programmes already undertaken with other organizations of the United Nations system, in particular in the areas of strengthening the national statistical system, local and community development, human security, and combating HIV/AIDS and malaria. Existing partnerships with the private sector and local communities will also be strengthened through a resource mobilization strategy extended to other traditional or potential partners, including the African Development Bank, trust fund administrators and decentralized cooperation actors.

25. In the light of the foregoing, the capacities of the country office will be strengthened in the areas of resource mobilization, support proposal development and programme implementation, through training and the contribution of specialized expertise by field offices and regional centres.

4.2 Monitoring and evaluation

26. Monitoring and evaluation of the programme will be carried out on the basis of a monitoring and evaluation plan jointly with the Government, agencies of the United Nations system and other development partners (bilateral and multilateral partners, the private sector and civil society) involved in the implementation of this programme. The exercise will take the form of joint missions, reviews, evaluations, audits and semi-annual progress reports. The Minister in charge of planning will be responsible for coordination, maintaining constant contact with the institutions concerned.

27. Annual programme reviews will be organized simultaneously with monitoring of UNDAF implementation and in conjunction with the periodic reviews of national tools for development planning so as to provide a picture of the progress made in the achievement of the expected outcomes, including MDGs.

28. Annual project and programme audits will be systematic and mandatory, and an audit plan will be drafted for that purpose.

Annex

Results and resources framework for Gabon

National priority: Economic, democratic and local governance becomes more effective by 2025: Strategic areas 1, 3 and 4 of the economic and social policy letter.

Country programme/UNDAF outcomes: outcome 1: the national statistical system produces quality information on the monitoring of MDGs; outcome 5: the population, in particular the most vulnerable groups, benefits from sectoral strategies and policies targeting equitable, equal and inclusive development of human capital. Outcome 1 indicator: the proportion of MDG indicators including recent (2 years) representative data from the national statistical system. Outcome 5 indicator: the proportion of the population living below the poverty line. Strategic area: governance and environment.

Government partner contributions	Other partner contributions	UNDP contribution	Indicators, baselines and targets for UNDP contributions	Indicative country programme outputs	Indicative resources by outcome (in thousands of United States dollars)
Implementation of SNDS between now and 2016; preparation and implementation of national and sectoral development planning strategies	Mobilization of technical expertise and financial resources needed to implement SNDS and specific support to in the targeted priority areas	Support the implementation of SNDS; specific support in the area of governance, development planning and environmental conservation, including adaptation to climate change	<p>Indicator 1: Proportion of MDG indicators derived from recent (2 years) representative data from the national statistical system</p> <p>Baseline: not available</p> <p>Target: 80 per cent</p> <p>Indicator 2: Proportion of staff of community associations, NGOs, sectoral ministries, local authorities trained in and using the planning, monitoring and evaluation tools</p> <p>Baseline: 0</p> <p>Target: 300</p>	<p>Analysis of institutional capacities and operational plans for implementation of SNDS in cooperation with counterparts; launch of preliminary phase</p> <p>The Gabonese administration has tools and instruments for planning and monitoring and evaluation of development and the environment</p> <p>Mechanisms to strengthen capacities established, funded and made operational to support political and institutional reforms (administration, Parliament, the private sector and civil society) and mechanisms to</p>	<p>Regular resources: 953</p> <p>Other resources: 8,400</p>

promote South-South
cooperation

National priority: Consolidation of human and social development.

Country programme/UNDAF outcomes: Outcome 3: communities use preventative measures that encourage the improvement of their well-being; outcome 6: populations, in particular the poorest groups, have access to quality educational and sanitation services, including HIV/AIDS services. Outcome 3 indicator: the proportion of the target population that has access to quality educational and sanitation services, including HIV/AIDS services. Strategic areas: poverty reduction, combating HIV/AIDS and empowering women.

Decentralized cooperation actors, the private sector, NGOs and local communities will contribute funding and technical support for the improvement of living conditions of the target population	Strengthening national efforts to promote the achievement of MDGs by 2015 and support for the decentralization process	<p>Indicator 1.1: Proportion of the population in targeted departments whose level of human development has improved (local human development indicator)</p> <p>Baseline and Target: to be defined following the 2011 poverty survey</p> <p>Indicator 2.1: A household waste pre-collection system is in place and operational in underserved neighbourhoods of target provinces</p> <p>Baseline: 17 LBV</p> <p>Target: 41</p> <p>Indicator 2.2: Local development plans and marketing documents in target provinces have been drafted</p> <p>Baseline: 6</p> <p>Target: 15</p>	<p>Frameworks for programme activities developed and implemented in a participatory manner for the three poorest departments of Gabon, and their standard of living increases through income-generating activities (MDG 1), empowerment of women (MDG 3) and health (MDGs 4 and 5)</p> <p>The Gabonese population benefits from urban sanitation projects and promotion of local development</p>	<p>Regular resources: 1,430</p> <p>Other resources: 9,100</p>
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