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**Draft country programme document for Mauritania
(2012-2016)**

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Situation analysis.	1-4	2
II. Past cooperation and lessons learned.	5	3
III. Proposed programme.	6-9	3
IV. Programme management, monitoring and evaluation.	10	5
Annex		
Results and resource framework for Mauritania.		6



I. Situation analysis

1. The 2008 political crisis led to the holding of presidential elections in July 2009. Coordination between Mauritania and its partners resumed in 2010, once constitutional order had been restored. At the political level, national stakeholders are continuing to negotiate the terms for dialogue and national reconciliation. The public authorities have, moreover, undertaken reforms focused on promoting good governance and improving living conditions for the poor. In 2010, Mauritania formulated the third plan of action (2011-2015) for the Strategic Framework for Poverty Reduction (SFPR III).

2. However, significant development challenges remain. With a per capita gross domestic product of \$1,123 in 2010, Mauritania is still ranked among the least developed countries. The economy lacks diversification and is heavily influenced by external shocks. In the last few years, there has been very little progress towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The 2010 report revealed major shortcomings in the areas of health, the environment, employment and gender issues. The rates for infant and child mortality and maternal mortality remain very high (122 deaths per 1,000 and 686 deaths per 100,000 live births, respectively, with 2015 targets set at 45 per 1,000 and 232 per 100,000). With regard to gender issues, although gender parity has been achieved at primary school level, Mauritania is seriously lagging behind in terms of women's participation in the economy and gender parity in secondary education. The overall situation in relation to the MDGs reveals a low level of human development; in 2010, Mauritania had a human development index of 0.433, and was ranked 136th of 169 countries. Successive strategies to combat poverty have failed to reduce poverty in rural areas, where most of the population lives (62 per cent). Although overall poverty levels decreased (from 46.7 per cent to 42 per cent between 2004 and 2008), there was a slight increase (from 59 to 59.4 per cent) in rural areas due to the limited impact of development strategies in the areas of agriculture and livestock. In addition, basic services are not sufficiently developed. Levels of unemployment and underemployment remain high (31 per cent and 14 per cent, respectively), while the informal economy (85 per cent) continues to play a dominant role.

3. Depending on the year and time of year, between 18 and 31 per cent of those living in rural areas face food insecurity. This is due, inter alia, to the fact that few people have access to productive resources, which are limited and increasingly vulnerable to land degradation and the effects of climate change. Mauritania faces other climate-related challenges that negatively impact human development, including floods, droughts, rising sea levels and loss of biodiversity.

4. Although the Government is striving to promote national unity, mainly through programmes to facilitate the reintegration of returnees and eradicate the legacy of slavery, democratic and economic governance reforms remain key. Moreover, democratic institutions must be strengthened, efforts made to combat corruption, and support provided for employment and poverty-reduction policies in order to mitigate the risks associated with the increasingly fragile social cohesion. Insecurity in the subregion is another cause for serious concern that must be addressed through urgent job creation projects for young people.

II. Past cooperation and lessons learned

5. Despite the short duration of the 2009-2010 programme, which was implemented in the midst of an institutional crisis for much of 2009, the assessments carried out during its implementation indicate that some progress was achieved. In the area of democratic governance, UNDP endeavoured to strengthen the capacities of Parliament, which established its first information commission. UNDP support also helped to adopt a national strategy to combat corruption and to formulate a national strategy for the gender mainstreaming. As for the environment, UNDP support has resulted in the inclusion of environmental governance in the SFPR III and the application of Agenda 21 in four departments. However, the capacity to implement commitments on environmental governance must be strengthened, especially at the sectoral and regional levels. With regard to poverty reduction, UNDP helped broaden the range of analyses required when formulating development strategies and policies. It also helped draw up the SFPR III and its regional versions. UNDP also helped ensure the success of the Round Table for Mauritania, which was held in Brussels in 2010 and mobilized significant financial commitments for development. UNDP support contributed to the establishment of community infrastructure and joint management mechanisms that bring together returnee and host populations. There were some difficulties with the previous programme, mainly relating to inadequate implementation capacity at the national level and institutional instability, which made it difficult to ensure that the actions taken had lasting effects. The proposed programme will build on the lessons learned by: (a) prioritizing action that has a direct impact on the living conditions of the most vulnerable groups; (b) strengthening action to promote Government and civil society capacity-building, especially with regard to overseeing development at the local level; (c) incorporating the option of long-term support for national implementation; and (d) strengthening institutional support for measures to combat corruption.

III. Proposed programme

6. This programme, which covers the same period as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), 2012-2016, supports national initiatives undertaken as part of the strategic priorities of the SFPR III. UNDP will focus on creating an enabling environment for development by strengthening democratic governance and on supporting national development policies and strategies, particularly in the four target regions for UNDP human development planning activities (the ART GOLD programme). Integrated community programmes that have a multiplier effect on improving social cohesion and national unity will be implemented. These programmes will link efforts to reduce poverty through job creation at the local level and the need to improve food security, mitigate the effects of climate change and enhance participation and local governance. This action will be undertaken in partnership with key Government actors, as well as United Nations bodies and civil society. UNDP assistance will be targeted in three main focus areas: (a) combating poverty and food insecurity; (b) democratic and economic governance and social cohesion; and (c) good environmental governance and the sustainable management of natural resources.

Focus Area 1: Reduction of poverty and food insecurity

7. UNDP action will have three priorities: (a) formulate strategies and policies for inclusive growth to enable the poor to access productive resources and technology more easily; (b) formulate strategies and policies to create wage and self-employment, especially for young people and women; and (c) improve local and community-level capacities with a view to creating jobs and generating income through the preservation and sustainable economic development of natural resources and adaptation to climate change. UNDP will help the Government implement the SFPR III, so that it is translated into strategies for inclusive economic and sectoral growth that create jobs, with a view to strengthening social cohesion and improving women's access to productive resources. In addition, UNDP will help improve understanding of the various aspects of and trends in poverty. Particular attention will be given to the national strategy for food security, especially with regard to access to productive assets and putting in place a regulatory framework for rights-based land tenure. Together with providing support and advice, UNDP will work to strengthen institutional and community capacities at the local level, and will implement pilot schemes to create wage and self-employment. UNDP action in this area will give priority to local development programmes that also have a cross-cutting impact in terms of protecting and enhancing natural resources, adapting to climate change, and strengthening food security, gender equality and social cohesion. UNDP will also test new approaches to: renewable energy use in rural areas; support for decision-making and the formulation of rural development policy; and providing universal access to services.

Focus Area 2: Democratic and economic governance and social cohesion

8. As part of the efforts to strengthen democratic governance, UNDP support will enhance national capacities for implementing policies and programmes and providing high-quality public goods and services. UNDP will focus its support in three priority areas: (a) developing the capacity of democratic institutions, including Parliament, to broaden public participation and improve public oversight; (b) strengthening the capacity of the public administration for more efficient and transparent implementation of development policies based on the MDGs; and (c) strengthening the national capacity to promote social cohesion by ensuring that human rights are fully enjoyed, especially by young people, women and marginalized groups. UNDP will assist in the implementation of the SFPR III, the gender mainstreaming strategy, the national strategy to combat corruption and the human rights strategy. It will also assist the Government to operationalize the SFPR III with regard to monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and a reliable system to collect, analyse and disseminate sex-disaggregated data. Moreover, particular emphasis will be placed on regional implementation of the SFPR III, by mobilizing local stakeholders in accordance with national strategies for each sector, in four pilot regions. UNDP will also continue to support measures to improve aid coordination mechanisms. In addition, the electoral framework will be strengthened and support provided for democratic institutions, including Parliament and civil society organizations.

Focus Area 3: Good environmental governance and sustainable management of natural resources

9. UNDP will focus its interventions on flagship initiatives that have a direct impact on poverty reduction. In the context of oil and gas exploitation, for example, UNDP will help the Government to establish an innovative partnership to protect marine and coastal biodiversity with a view to safeguarding the country's marine resources. UNDP will also support Government efforts to establish a framework for renewable energy development, with a view to addressing the issue of energy poverty, particularly in rural areas. UNDP will enhance the capacities of the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development for intersectoral coordination and environmental follow-up and monitoring and will help the Ministry to implement the national environmental action plan, the national plan for climate change adaptation and the national action plan for risk and disaster management.

IV. Programme management, monitoring and evaluation

10. The country programme will be implemented primarily under the national execution modality, for which UNDP will provide support services and draw up support programmes. In certain situations, UNDP may use the direct execution modality following consultations with the Government. UNDP may also request the use of the expedited procedure. The country office will gradually incorporate the thematic issues of the environment and poverty and hire staff with expertise in development plans that take the risk of crisis into account. The country office will also employ United Nations Volunteers to coordinate activities undertaken in the target regions. The year 2011 will see the introduction of the harmonized approach to cash transfers in United Nations agencies. The programme will preferably be implemented through joint programmes with United Nations organizations, particularly with regard to strengthening the national statistics system, promoting social cohesion, protecting the environment and adapting to climate change. In order to maximize the impact of its actions, UNDP will work with a wide range of civil society organizations. Moreover, a strategy will be implemented in collaboration with United Nations bodies and bilateral and multilateral partners to enhance resource mobilization. Programme monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be anchored in the inter-agency United Nations Development Assistance Framework monitoring mechanism. Annual programme reviews will evaluate progress achieved and the results obtained will be included in annual reports.

Annex

Results and resource framework for Mauritania

National priority or goal: Reduction of poverty and food insecurity (SFPR III area 2/UNDAF areas 1 and 3)

Country programme/UNDAF results: (1) Groups which are poor and vulnerable to food insecurity have sustainable access to productive assets and technologies in order to improve their living conditions; (2) In the targeted areas, vulnerable groups, especially young people and women, can improve their income through a range of wage or self-employment opportunities; (3) Poor groups, especially young people and women, receive lasting benefits at the local level from natural resources development and climate change adaptation. **Results indicators:** poverty levels in rural areas and youth unemployment rates. **Areas of intervention of the strategic plan:** Poverty reduction and achievement of the MDGs.

<i>Contributions from the Government partner</i>	<i>Contributions from other partners</i>	<i>Contributions from UNDP</i>	<i>Indicators, baselines and targets for UNDP contributions</i>	<i>Country programme output indicators</i>	<i>Indicative resources, by result (in United States dollars)</i>
The Government will focus its efforts on strengthening rural management structures and will work on the consistency of the job creation mechanism.	The other partners will support programmes for food assistance, infrastructure and agricultural development. The World Bank will support efforts to improve the business environment.	UNDP will contribute to implementing SFPR III through job creation policies, especially for young people and women, and integrated local development projects.	<p>Main sectoral policies incorporate strategic elements of SFPR III.</p> <p>Baseline: 0</p> <p>Target: 3 sectors (to be determined).</p> <p>Percentage of women and young people who benefit from employment programmes.</p> <p>Baseline: 0</p> <p>Targets: 50% and 30%, respectively.</p>	Assessments, public consultations and planning for the national employment promotion strategy have been completed effectively. The pilot methodology for job creation in natural resources management has been developed and disseminated.	<p>Regular 3 800 000</p> <p>Other 6 000 000</p>

National priority or goal: Enhancement of economic, democratic, regional and local governance, citizens' monitoring of public policy and strengthening of capacities of actors (SFPR III area 4/UNDAF area 4)

Country programme/UNDAF results: (4) Democratic institutions are strengthened to ensure the full exercise of their functions and they promote public participation and oversight; (5) The public administration has enhanced capacities and competencies for more effective implementation of development policies based on the MDGs, including through a gender-sensitive approach; (6) Institutions, vulnerable individuals and civil society actors are more actively engaged in promoting social cohesion from the perspective of full enjoyment of human rights. **Results indicators:** percentage of women in elective office; index of perception of corruption. **Area of intervention of the strategic plan:** democratic governance.

The Government will continue economic governance reforms, modernization of the administration and human rights efforts.	Development partners contribute to reform of the justice system, strengthening of the macroeconomic framework and administrative capacities, including in the context of decentralization.	UNDP will support capacity-building for participatory oversight of development at the national and regional level, and of the regulatory framework with a view to strengthening democracy, human rights and conflict prevention.	The proportion of women parliamentarians in leadership positions in the Assembly has increased. Baseline: 20% Target: 30% The national strategy for social cohesion is operational. Baseline: none Target: achieve the minimum operational criteria.	Structures at the national and local levels (in four regions) have tools for planning, management, follow-up and evaluation of SFPR III and the gender-sensitive MDGs. Electoral legislation is codified and gender sensitive; the support unit in Parliament is operational.	Regular 3 858 000 Other 12 000 000
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National priority or goal: Good environmental governance and sustainable management of natural resources with a view to reducing poverty and greater adaptation to climate change (SFPR III areas 2 and 4/UNDAF area 3)

National priorities or goals: (7) National institutions incorporate environmental issues and climate change in the formulation and implementation of development policies and strategies. **Results indicator:** Number of sectoral strategies that incorporate environmental issues in line with international standards. **Areas of intervention of the strategic plan:** energy and environment.

The Government will contribute to institutional capacity-building for environmental coordination and management.	The partners will contribute to institutional capacity-building. The World Bank will support the environmental information system.	UNDP will support the development of policies that incorporate the protection and development of natural resources and climate change adaptation into the efforts to reduce poverty.	<p>Percentage of renewable energies in energy production.</p> <p>Baseline: 0</p> <p>Target: 10%</p> <p>Utilisation rate for non-wood fuel.</p> <p>Baseline: 10%</p> <p>Target: 30%</p>	<p>The framework for promotion of renewable energies has been prepared and the pilot phase has begun.</p> <p>The mechanism for consultation on biodiversity in the oil and gas sector is operational.</p>	<p>Regular 1 500 000</p> <p>Other 8 000 000</p>
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