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**Programme Document Outline for the Republic of
the Congo (2014–2018)**

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I. Situation analysis

1. For some years the Congo has enjoyed a favourable socio-political and economic environment. The climate of security and peace has been sustained and the political climate has eased: the presidential election in 2009 went off calmly. A concerted approach among political stakeholders in 2011 enabled a code of good behaviour to be signed as a prelude to the 2012 Parliamentary elections. However, the low voter turnout in the last elections and the challenges to the results by some opposition parties could constitute worrying signs, requiring an adequate response. Indeed, despite the real progress recorded in comparison with the earlier elections, the Parliamentary elections displayed certain shortcomings, particularly regarding the reliability of the lists of voters, the distribution mechanism for voters' cards, the organization of procedures inside polling stations, voter awareness-raising campaigns and low involvement of women within political parties, leading to low representation of women in Parliament, with only 12 elected members out of 139. This finding demonstrates the need to build the capacity of the institutions responsible for organizing the elections, but also of the political stakeholders, civil society and the population, particularly its vulnerable sectors, to increase voter turnout and support for smooth political transition.

2. In economic terms, the Congo achieved sustained growth (6.2% per annum between 2009 and 2012) with low inflation (3.7% per annum over that period) and reached the completion point for the Heavily-Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative in 2010. But this growth was not very inclusive and did not engender many jobs owing to the low level of diversification of the basis of the economy, dominated as it is by the oil sector, since the non-oil-related sector contributed on average only a third in value to generation of the gross domestic product (GDP). Besides that, the business climate discriminates heavily against the private sector (ranking 181st out of 183 on the DOING BUSINESS indicator for 2012). The country has great development potential, but growth outside the oil sector, which is supposed to be its driving force, is held back by the limited capability and efficiency of the authorities in managing public investment programmes and of the population in developing initiatives in the productive sectors of the economy (agriculture, fishing, tourism, etc.).

3. In social terms, the country shows signs of fragility despite the improvement in economic circumstances. The high incidence of poverty¹ (46.5% in 2011), the worrying level of unemployment (6.9% in 2011), particularly among young people (42.2% of under-30-year-olds), the low level (0.537) of the Human Development Index (HDI), which ranked the country 137th out of 187 in 2011, and the inequalities (Gini index of 0.47, gender inequality index of 0.628), constitute threats to social harmony. Delays and shortfalls noted in the decentralization process are causes of the slow progress towards inclusive human development. As for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), recent assessments indicate that only MDG2, relating to universal primary education, could be achieved by 2015. To achieve the MDGs, it will therefore be necessary to insert accelerators to speed up programmes to help the poor.

¹ Source: DSCERP [Strategy Paper for Growth, Employment and Poverty Reduction] 2012–2016 and Congolese Household Survey (ECOM 2011).

4. With regard to the environment, changes were very difficult to discern over this period. The Congo possesses 65% forest cover, hydroclimatic potential, national parks (12% of the territory), but the rural environment is very vulnerable because of heavy pressure on timber resources due to poverty and the weakness of power supply. Although there were only modest improvements in the human environment, preparation for greater resilience to domestic and foreign upheavals, management of waste and of natural disasters, the significance of these signs of progress was demonstrated after the explosions that occurred in an ammunition depot in Brazzaville on 4 March 2012.

5. Being aware of all these shortcomings, the Government established a new strategic planning framework (DSCERP [Strategy Paper for Growth, Employment and Poverty Reduction] 2012–2016) This strategy aims to strengthen all levels of governance and to diversify the economy with a view to inclusive growth. The Congo will thus be able to face up to the following major challenges: (a) the weakness of participatory democracy; (b) the weakness of the institutions for efficient implementation of a planning and development process at national and local levels, focused on diversification of the economy, accelerated progress on the MDGs and reduction of inequalities, particularly between men and women; (c) resilience to upheavals of a short-term economic, accidental and/or natural origin, protection of the environment, mitigation of the effects of climate change and adjustment to such change.

II. Past cooperation and lessons learned from experience

6. The 2009-2013 Country Programme was structured around the following three main themes: (a) support for democratic governance and peace-building; (b) poverty reduction and achievement of the MDGs; (c) prevention of crises, support for recovery, improvement of energy and the environment. Promotion of results-based management and gender perspectives and the fight against HIV/AIDS were taken into account in those support themes, whose main thread was capacity-building of institutions and of the population.

7. The main results are: (a) peacebuilding through initiatives for weapons collection and destruction in the POOL department, where socio-economic reintegration operations are currently being conducted, fostering the concept of human security; (b) improvement of the framework for consultation and coordination between the political parties and adoption of a code of good behaviour, which, among other things, has enabled electoral processes to take place in an atmosphere of restraint and contributed to political stability; (c) national capacity-building for strategic planning, which resulted in the drafting of the National Development Plan (NDP) 2012-2016, of which the DSCERP is one of the four parts, and in better coverage of the MDGs through drafting of the National Plan for Achievement of the MDGs and publication of the second National Report on Progress towards Achievement of the MDGs; the survey on the vulnerability of the Congolese economy and its prospects for diversification; and the National Human Development Report; (d) setting-up of the National Environment Agency and of a climate database with computer modelling of climate scenarios and extreme situations, and outlining of a policy framework for the green economy; (e) framing of the preliminary draft law on parity and the plan of action for implementation of the national gender perspectives policy, taking account of gender perspectives in

national statistics and framing of an African Gender and Development Index (AGDI) for the Congo; (f) adoption and dissemination to the general public of the law on fighting for and protecting the rights of people living with HIV.

8. Analysis of the past cooperation programme, conducted through annual studies of the Action Plan for implementing the Country Programme and projects, recommends avoiding spreading support too thinly in order to ensure its efficiency and optimize its impact. Similarly, it requires the strengthening of partnerships with civil society stakeholders and grassroots community-based organizations. Finally, it recommends strengthening the programme approach with allowance made for the cross-cutting themes, and consolidating the achievements of South-South cooperation as well as monitoring and evaluation of development outcomes. Arrears recorded in drawdown of local matching funds have sometimes delayed completion times. The Ministry of Planning has committed itself to easing the way with the Ministry of Finance for coordination of the raising of matching funds as early as 2013. The absence of a coherent monitoring and evaluation system has not always enabled progress on the MDGs to be monitored and certain priorities to be redefined. The insertion of a UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and DSCERP monitoring and evaluation team, with which UNDP will be associated, will contribute to correcting this shortcoming.

III. Proposed programme

9. The programme stems from the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2014–2018 and comes as back-up for the national efforts to achieve the strategic priorities of the DSCERP (2012-2016). It is based on three of the five national priorities: consolidation of governance (MLA 1); social development and inclusion (MLA 3); promotion of balanced and sustainable development (MLA 5). It aims to consolidate the capabilities of institutions at the national and local level, emphasizing community participation, in order to ensure improved social cohesion and sustainable human development. As for programming and management of resources, UNDP will see to it that the principles set out in the Paris Declaration and the Accra Action Plan are implemented and that the cross-cutting themes, in particular HIV/AIDS, gender perspectives, capacity-building, human rights advocacy and results-base management, are mainstreamed.

10. **Promotion of democratic governance.** UNDP will continue its key partnership with the national party for the next two scheduled elections (the Presidential election in 2016 and the Parliamentary elections in 2017), in particular regarding surveillance of electorate numbers, and will provide back-up for implementation of the Government's decentralization strategy. The emphasis will be upon: (a) targeted consolidation of institutions, political stakeholders and civil society organizations involved and associated with the electoral processes; (b) building Parliament's capacities, so that it can assume its role of law-making and supervising public action; (c) building the capacities of the public administration and democratic institutions, in particular the Constitutional Court and the Court of Auditors. UNDP's back-up will also aim to help the Government endow the twelve departments with functional development plans drafted in concert with the local communities while at the same time building their capacity for public financial management; (d) building the local authorities' and communities' capacity for implementing these plans.

11. **Acceleration of the MDGs and reduction of inequalities.** UNDP's main contribution in this area will be to support the worldwide efforts of the authorities and the United Nations system with regard to: (a) expanding the statistics to provide disaggregated data on MDGs (women, the young, the elderly, the disabled, indigenous peoples); (b) insertion of mechanisms to foster inclusive growth and better access for poor people to means and techniques of production, especially for young people and women; (c) supporting the multisectoral approach to reduce the incidence of HIV/AIDS. Finally, UNDP will organize discussions with the Government on the balance of the conclusions of Rio+20 and the post-2015 scale-up programme and on mainstreaming them into national strategies.

12. Protection of the environment and fostering of sustainable, inclusive, resilient development. As the authorities' main partner in the post-2015 development agenda momentum, UNDP is going to consolidate its support for: (a) reform of the political, legal and regulatory framework through revision of the National Action Programme on the Environment (PNAE); (b) implementation of afforestation and biodiversity conservation measures; (c) promotion of renewable energies at national and local levels, with the involvement of women who are heads of households; (d) advocacy of workable plans for waste management in the three largest cities in the Congo; (e) enhancing the advance warning system and preparation for disaster management through outreach to vulnerable groups (women, the young, the elderly, the disabled and indigenous peoples).

IV. Programme management, monitoring and evaluation

13. Management of the programme shall be based on national implementation. UNDP will therefore place the emphasis on development of national capacities. But the direct implementation mode may be employed if the Government or donors so request. Similarly, and in agreement with the Government, civil society or United Nations specialized agencies could be considered as implementing partners. Where possible, priority will be given to joint programmes. The policy of Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) may be applied once the current macro evaluation has been completed. The fast-track mode shall be resorted to in case of need. The Ministry of Planning shall be the coordinator of UNDP backstopping.

14. Monitoring and evaluation shall be conducted under the leadership of the Ministry of Planning, using the managerial staff provided for monitoring and evaluating UNDAF. The Implementation Units shall see to the operational monitoring of the programme's activities. The project management committees, field visits, annual examinations and systems established under the auspices of UNDAF shall constitute the template for the cooperation programme's evaluation plan.

15. UNDP's cooperation strategy will rely upon sustaining the existing partnerships and inserting new arrangements. The research will be carried out around themes connected to the post-2015 development agenda, Congo 2025, and management of the Congo's natural resources. An important place will be assigned to sharing experience and knowledge with other countries of the Global South, particularly Brasil, to support its economic diversification activities, and Benin, to promote the Songhaï Centres.

16. In implementing the programme, due allowance should be made for risks that may result from the forthcoming elections, the knowledge gap with regard to reliable statistical data, the belated provision of local matching of funds, and the occurrence of accidental natural or economic disasters that may affect the sociopolitical or economic environment. To avert them, the Country Office will encourage the Directorate-General for Electoral Affairs (DGAE) and the National Electoral Commission (CONEL) to take urgent steps to correct shortcomings connected with the organization of elections and acknowledgement of complaints registered. It will draw up a strategy for mobilization of national resources, making allowance for difficulties relating to drawdown of local matching funds, will strive for the upgrading of national capacity for disaster prevention, and will help promote the implementation of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS).

Annex

Results and resources framework for the Republic of the Congo (2014-2018)

National priority: Growth, Employment and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (DSCERP), MLA 1: Improve governance					
UNDAF outcome No. 1: By 2018, electoral processes shall be free, fair, credible and transparent					
Results indicators: (1) Percentage of Congolese people (disaggregated - women, the young, the elderly, the disabled and indigenous peoples) who perceive the elections as free, fair, credible and transparent; (2) Increase in voter turnout; (3) Number of appeals examined by institutions responsible for electoral disputes					
Contributions of the partner government	Contributions of other partners	UNDP contributions	Indicators, baselines and targets of UNDP contributions	Products indicative Country Programme	Indicative resources by profit (US\$)
DGAE and CONEL will organize the elections and provide information on the electoral process Parliament will examine drafts and proposed laws on reform of State institutions The Justice Department will ensure observance and rigorous application of the texts	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA): support for citizenship education European Union (EU), France, United States, African Union: financing of electoral observation World Bank, EU, United States, France: support for sectoral reform projects (administration, public finances, health, education, equipment and infrastructure)	UNDP will support: capacity-building of stakeholders involved in free, transparent and credible elections, with a view to drawing up a consensual electoral list of voters; Parliament's capacity to control the budget and produce laws and regulations; organizational audits of the democratic institutions – the Court of Auditors and the Social and Economic Council (CES)	Indicator: Existence of a consensual electoral list of voters (Baseline: lack of a consensual list of voters. Target: The list of voters is accepted by the majority of the opposition) Indicator: Existence of a budget regulation law (Baseline: No budget regulation law. Target: Budget regulation law enacted) Indicator: Capacities of the Court of Auditors and the CES identified (Baseline: Poor performance of the Court of Auditors and the CES. Target: Organizational audits of the Court of Auditors and the CES carried out)	State stakeholders, NGOs, political parties and media trained in organizing elections and population made aware of the electoral process Parliament's capacities strengthened Organizational audits of the democratic institutions carried out	Regular resources: 500,000 Other resources: 5,500,000
National priorities: Strategy for Poverty Reduction (DSCERP), MLA 1: Improve governance					
The Government will strive to transfer to local communities, through adequate allocation of financial resources and trained and retrained staff, expertise provided for by the law on decentralization	Global Food Programme (GFP), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNESCO, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), EU, France: support for design and implementation of DDPs through technical and financial assistance	UNDP will assist in the drafting, with community involvement, of Departmental Development Plans (DDPs) in the country's 12 departments and will promote the insertion of the DDP financing mechanism at the local level	Indicator: Number of departments having an operational DDP, mainstreaming gender perspectives (Baseline: 2 departments have operational DDPs. Target: 12 departments have DDPs drafted with the involvement of the communities and mainstreaming gender perspectives)	The departments have an operational DDP, mainstreaming gender perspectives The local communities are trained and involved in the DDP	Regular resources: 1,350,000 Other resources: 11,500,000

National priority: Growth, Employment and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (DSCERP), MLA 3: Social development and inclusion					
UNDAF outcome No. 3: Between now and 2018, the most vulnerable people will have access to basic high-quality welfare (education, health, food security, water and sanitation), including appropriate financial services					
Results indicators: (1) Maternal mortality, (2) Infant mortality rate, (3) Child malnutrition, (4) Completion rate of girls' and boys' secondary studies					
The Government will finance the priorities for action included in the NDP, in particular access to welfare to reduce shortfalls in water, energy, sanitation, health and education	FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), UNHCR, World Bank, World Food Programme (WFP): promotion of food security, nutrition, rights and good living conditions for the population United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNW), United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), WHO, UNAIDS, UNICEF: lowering of the maternal mortality rate in the 5 most vulnerable departments	UNDP will advocate a programme for accelerating the MDGs in rural areas, will back the insertion of a mechanism for follow-up and evaluation of the MDGs, will back the holding of a round table (RT) on the post-2015 development agenda and will promote an enabling environment for the rights of people living with HIV, indigenous peoples and women, as well as access to decent jobs for young people	Indicator: Existence of reliable data on the MDGs (Baseline: Lack of disaggregated data. Target: Operational follow-up system for the MDGs) Indicator: Multidimensional Poverty Index in the areas covered by the programme (Baseline: High multi-dimensional poverty in rural areas. Target: Poverty level reduced by 25% in the 15 villages sponsored) Indicator: Report on the round table and post-2015 consultations (Baseline: TDR available. Target: RT held) Indicator: Number of women living with HIV/AIDS benefitting from legal aid (Baseline: Fewer than 5% of women. Target: 50% of women helped)	The statistical information system is operational; 15 villages created that are developing inclusive local growth through sustainable means and techniques of production Consolidation of rights protecting people living with HIV, women and vulnerable people	Regular resources: 475,000 Other resources: 6,000,000
National priority: Growth, Employment and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (DSCERP II), MLA 5: Promotion of balanced and sustainable development					
UNDAF outcome no.5: Between now and 2018, the government institutions and the population will have inserted sustainable environmental policy measures mainstreaming adjustment to climate change and mitigation of it; particular attention shall be paid to the active involvement of women in the programmes					
Results indicators: (1) Percentage of sectoral policies mainstreaming climate change, (2) Percentage of communities acting upon initiatives to mitigate, and adjust to, climate change					
The Government shall endow ministries and local communities with the technical and institutional capacity necessary for sustainable, participatory management of resources through equipment and targeted training in management of forest resources, disasters and waste	Trust Fund and civil society organizations: support for efforts made by the Government to improve implementation of adjustment and mitigation measures to combat climate change UNESCO, UNFPA, United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT), UNICEF, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), FAO, World Food Programme (WFP): revision of the educational and training manuals and programmes, mainstreaming the issue of climate change	UNDP will support: consolidation of the legal and regulatory framework; access for all to renewable energies, with particular emphasis on women and vulnerable groups; waste management; implementation of biodiversity conservation measures; emergency plan in the event of disaster	Indicator: Revised National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) (Baseline: NEAP revised in 1995. Target: NEAP updated every 2 years) Indicator: Percentage of households having access to renewable energies, (Baseline: No baseline case. Target: 25% of households (by gender, head of household, population group) have access to renewable energies) Indicator: Waste management plan operational in the 3 towns (Baseline: No waste management plan. Target: 3 operational waste management plans available) Indicator: Disaster management strategy carried out (Baseline: No strategy or management plan for disaster situations. Target: Strategy and management plan implemented)	The revised NEAP is available Biodiversity conservation measures have been implemented Renewable energies have been promoted, with women involved 3 waste management plans are operational The early warning system and the management plan for disaster situations are operational	Regular resources: 751,000 Other resources: 22,400,000