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Introduction

1. The country programme document was formulated in a participatory process that involved the organizations of the United Nations system (UNS) and Government representatives (through the multisectoral group established by a ministerial service note). The formulation of the document was based on the conclusions of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF, 2007-2011), in which representatives of the Government, the National Assembly, the Senate, civil society and the UNS participated and which was validated in February 2006 in accordance with the options in the *Document de stratégie de croissance et de réduction de la pauvreté* (DSCR) (Growth Strategy and Poverty Reduction Document) approved by the Committee of Ministers in January 2006. The process also took into account the programme evaluations adopted in the second UNDP country cooperation framework (CCF) 2002-2006, Gabon's National Progress Report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the DSCR.

I. Situation analysis

2. Gabon has an area of 267,667 km² with a population estimated in 2003 at 1,547,685 inhabitants, i.e. 5.7 inhabitants per km². At present, 84 per cent of the population is urban and is concentrated in the three main cities: Libreville, Port-Gentil and Franceville.

3. Gabon's economy is strongly dominated by the petroleum industry, which alone accounted on the average, during the period 2000-2004, for 45 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP), 78 per cent of export earnings and 62 per cent of budget revenue. The country's macroeconomic environment has been stable since 2000, with a real GDP growth rate that has been positive, though modest (average of 1.5 per cent) and an inflation rate reduced to an annual mean of 1.5 per cent. The current account surplus rose from CFAF 231 billion (CFA francs) in 2003 to 412 billion and 528 billion in 2004 and 2005, respectively.

4. Despite this excellent macroeconomic performance and a per capita GDP estimated at 5,439 in 2004, the incidence of poverty is relatively high: 33 per cent at the national level, 30 per cent in urban areas and 45 per cent in rural areas (*Enquête gabonaise pour l'évaluation et le suivi de la pauvreté, 2005* — Gabonese survey for the poverty evaluation and monitoring, 2005). Income inequalities are still sizeable: more than 90 per cent of the total income never reaches the hands of the poor, and women earn 60 per cent of what men earn.

5. Notwithstanding a high net enrolment rate at the primary level (92.4 per cent in 2005), the net secondary enrolment rate is low (52.66 per cent), the primary school repetition rate is very high (50 per cent in the first year and 30 per cent in the second) and there is a pronounced training vs. job mismatch. The health situation still exhibits considerable weaknesses: infant mortality rate of 91.4 per 1,000 and maternal mortality of 519 deaths per 100,000 live births (*Enquête démographique santé 2000* — Demographic and Health Survey 2000). HIV/AIDS (prevalence of 8.1 per cent in 2004) has come 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 to the fight against the pandemic. Malaria, the principal cause of hospitalization, is of endemic proportions: 40 per cent of children aged 0 to 5 years

and 71 per cent of all pregnant women suffer from the disease. What is more, 64 per cent of all households are in communities where waste is disposed of untreated.

6. In the area of environment, despite the significant progress made towards preserving biodiversity, industrial logging, the concentration of dangerous residual and industrial wastes and lack of carbon sequestration constitute obstacles to rational natural-resource management.

7. Gabon's human development indicator was estimated at 0.635 in 2003 (global *Human Development Report 2005*), ranking it in 123rd place on the world scale. This amounts to a difference of 43 places with respect to its international classification based on per capita GDP in terms of purchasing power parity.

8. This discrepancy and the great breadth of poverty in contrast to the country's wealth are due primarily to shortcomings of governance, manifested in a relatively ineffectual judicial and legal system, constitutional institutions that are still limited in their role of controlling government action, weak local institutions and a fairly marginal civil society. Thus, the poor quality of public expenditure, failure to control the channels of such expenditure and the persistence of extrabudgetary expenditures prevent the country from developing its social sectors, thus adding to the vulnerability of the population.

9. With a view to removing these brakes on development, the national authorities embarked on a medium-term economic adjustment programme aimed at significantly increasing growth and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. In May 2004, a confirmation agreement was concluded for a duration of 14 months with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This made it possible for the country to obtain additional budgetary support and the rescheduling of part of its debt payments to the Paris Club (in January 2005 the foreign debt amounted to 2.9 billion euros, or 49.6 per cent of the GDP). In view of the success of this programme, the finalization of the complete DSCRIP in December 2005 and the current elaboration of the medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF), Gabon is in a position to contemplate concluding a three-year economic programme (2006-2008) with IMF.

10. To support these efforts by the country, the UNS has adopted four priority action areas within the UNDAF context: (a) reduction of maternal and child mortality; (b) disease control; (c) promotion of governance; (d) poverty reduction.

II. Past cooperation and lessons learned

11. The second country cooperation framework (CCF) 2002-2006 had three interdependent thrusts: the promotion of governance, the promotion of concern for the environment and the effort to control HIV/AIDS and malaria. The principal results already achieved may be summarized as follows: In the area of *promotion of good governance*, the chief results of UNDP support relate to: (a) elaborating policies and strategies and carrying out studies aimed at promoting governance and reducing poverty; and (b) promoting human development policies with a view to achieving the MDGs.

12. With regard to *elaborating policies and strategies and carrying out studies aimed at promoting governance and reducing poverty*, support has been as follows: (a) vital, high-quality consulting and technical and financial support in the

preparation of the DSCR (see DSCR summary); (b) technical and financial support in the elaboration of the programme national de bonne gouvernance du Gabon (PNBG) (national good governance programme) (see Rapport préliminaire des Groupes thématiques), in partnership with the African Development Bank (AfDB), which entrusted the execution of the project to UNDP; (c) the process of bringing national legislation into line with the uniform acts of the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA); (d) the elaboration of guideline texts on decentralization and the carrying out of studies on setting up information systems at the local level; (e) support to parliamentary institutions, in partnership with the Association of Western European Parliamentarians against Apartheid.

13. *Advocacy for human development policies aimed at achieving the MDGs* was done through support for the elaboration of the first national progress report on MDGs (MDGR GN1), published in February 2004, and the elaboration, now in progress, of the second National Human Development Report.

14. In the realm of *environment*, the following should be noted: (a) the formulation and approval of a project development facility, particularly with regard to the investment project for biodiversity management in the Gabon, Congo and Cameroon border zone; (b) the elaboration of national policies on climate change (see Communication nationale sur les changements climatiques (national communication on climate changes)); (c) the preparation of the process of self-evaluation of national capacity-building needs and training provided within the framework of the Ozone Plan; and (d) the formulation of preventive and/or corrective measures against desertification and soil degradation.

15. With regard to *the fight against HIV/AIDS and malaria*, mention may be made of the following: (a) the integration of the HIV/AIDS crisis and the problem of malaria into poverty-reduction and development-planning policies; (b) the strengthening of the capacities of the structures and actors involved in combating those scourges (training of 179 peer educators and 10 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community organizations in providing psychological support services, 390 community relays, 2 operational provincial committees to provide prevention and counselling services and 165 data managers; (c) nutritional support and 200 educational kits supplied to 320 AIDS orphans; and (d) the acquisition of 244,161 K-OTab capsules and new therapeutic means for treating malaria at home and for intermittent presumptive treatment (IPT).

16. In the area of *poverty reduction*, innovative urban sanitation initiatives were undertaken, including the setting up, in partnership with the Libreville municipal council, of a household waste pre-collection system in certain squatter neighbourhoods of Libreville, which at the same time created jobs, increased income and generated new income. This experiment will be extended to include all the underprivileged quarters of the capital. A reliable microcredit mechanism for women is also being set up, involving Banque Gabonaise de Développement (BGD), community organizations and local authorities.

17. *Lessons learned from past cooperation*: Among the main lessons to be drawn from previous cooperation, we may note the following: (i) UNDP is one of the Government's key partners in the development of good-governance and poverty-reduction strategies, something that has enabled UNDP to play a central role in the formulation and implementation of the DSCR and the PNBG; (ii) the support and

advocacy of UNDP, together with other partners, have made it possible to place the problems of governance at the heart of national priorities; and (iii) the participatory process, the empowerment of community organizations and the development of synergy in the elaboration and execution of programmes should be encouraged.

18. It is essential to continue to develop and build national capacities and to promote economic and political good governance both at the central and at the local and community levels (local NGOs of the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM); and structures charged with managing the environment and integrating environmental issues into policies and programmes, etc.). Failure by the national side to live up to certain commitments or late payment of financial contributions for the execution of projects are obstacles to the achievement of the desired results. Maximizing and consolidating the results of certain programmes will require working towards greater synergy with other agencies and/or partners, especially for income-generating activities, the promotion of environmental goals and gender mainstreaming.

III. Proposed programme

19. On the basis of the national priorities contained in the DSCR, global UNDP priorities, the lessons learned from past cooperation and the UNDAF 2007-2011 support areas, the country programme will contribute primarily towards promoting good governance, fighting poverty and combating disease, three of the four action areas on which the UNDAF focuses.

20. The “gender” dimension, which is a cross-cutting concern, will be integrated into each component of the country programme: the programmes to be adopted must at all times take into account gender issues both during their elaboration and in their implementation. Mutual synergy will also be developed with other United Nations organizations and other bilateral and multilateral partners.

Good governance

21. The objective is to improve political, economic and local governance, including the African Peer Review Mechanism. Particular stress will be placed on local and environmental governance, in close connection with action to reduce poverty. The main desired outcomes are: (a) to improve the operating environment of public, political and social institutions; (b) to foster local and community dynamics, including decentralized cooperation; (c) to strengthen public management capacity; (d) to promote conservation and sustainable environmental management.

22. In order for those outcomes to be achieved: (a) operational, well-developed modern administrative and financial management tools are made available to administrations; (b) the integrated system for the management of socio-economic, demographic and environmental information is improved at all levels (largely by strengthening the capacities of national institutions to collect and make available reliable statistical data); (c) the legal framework, organization and operation of civil society are strengthened; (d) a national gender mainstreaming strategy is developed and adopted; (e) the capacities of community organizations are strengthened and developed; (f) national programmes for the implementation of development plans include the concerns of vulnerable groups; (g) the natural resource strategic framework and the related management capacities are strengthened; (h) mechanisms

for the conservation of ecosystems that support carbon sequestration are developed and put into operation.

Poverty reduction

23. UNDP support for poverty reduction, in conjunction with the promotion of good governance, is intended to help produce the following UNDAF outcomes: (a) budgetary, fiscal and sectoral policies for the poor are adopted and implemented; (b) the income of poor and vulnerable groups is increased; and (c) the most deprived and vulnerable population groups gain access to basic social services.

24. These outcomes are produced chiefly through the following factors: (a) national and local capacities in the area of budgetary and fiscal policy in favour of the poor are strengthened and developed and in phase with the DSCR and the MDGs; (b) the institutional framework of the DSCR is operational; (c) the DSCR monitoring and evaluation system is operational and efficient; (d) strategic and operational programming for poverty reduction and MDG monitoring is strengthened; (e) instruments of political and public dialogue for the achievement of the MDGs are produced and disseminated and the related reports are circulated; (f) outreach microfinance institutions are created and reinforced; (g) income-generating activities are developed in target areas, including activities that favour vulnerable women; (h) community social infrastructures are rehabilitated in target areas.

Disease control

25. UNDP support for the effort to combat disease will operate essentially through two main components: (a) support for the development and implementation of the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria, for which UNDP Gabon has been designated by the Government as the principal recipient (which explains the involvement of UNDP in activities that would not necessarily be part of its usual service lines); and (b) support connected with its service lines, namely leadership development and the coordination of initiatives in the fight against these pandemics. This support is aimed at contributing to the realization of the following UNDAF outcomes: (i) the HIV/AIDS spreading trend is stopped and reversed; (ii) access to comprehensive care is increased; (iii) children under 5 years of age and pregnant women receive therapeutic care and protective means against malaria at the health-care-facility and community levels.

26. The main corresponding outcomes are as follows: (a) populations at risk know how to prevent HIV infection; (b) a study of the impact of sociocultural determinants on the fight against HIV/AIDS is carried out and grass-roots-level cultural leaders and actors are informed, sensitized and educated regarding HIV/AIDS prevention; (c) orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS have been identified and provided with nutritional care; (d) individuals living with HIV or AIDS receive appropriate triple-drug therapy if they need it; (e) pregnant women identified in four provinces receive IPT; (f) pregnant women and children under 5 years of age use insecticide-treated mosquito nets; (g) national capacities for collecting data and making them available are strengthened; (h) monitoring of antimalarial drug resistance is provided; (i) the mechanism for national coordination of the fight against HIV/AIDS is in place and operational; (j) the capacities of local actors and public institutions have been strengthened for the fight against

HIV/AIDS; and (k) the leadership of local actors is strengthened to enhance the effectiveness of the fight against HIV/AIDS.

IV. Programme management, monitoring and evaluation

Management

27. The country programme, 2007-2011, will be implemented in accordance with the national execution modality, the aim being to strengthen the country's capacities in the areas of management, monitoring and evaluation of the projects and programmes selected. While national execution constitutes the basic approach, its adoption will depend on the context of the projects implemented and will be by mutual consent with the national counterpart, with a view to both efficiency and national capacity-building. Where necessary, therefore, direct execution will be chosen, or execution by another United Nations organization or an NGO.

28. The country programme will be implemented in partnership with other United Nations organizations and other bilateral and multilateral partners with a view to enhancing national capacities. Its management will be results-driven and the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness will be applied gradually.

29. To that end, joint programmes will be developed more and more with other organizations of the UNS, with which discussions are already under way, especially in the fields of local and community development and the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. Similarly, solid partnerships will be formed with the private sector and local communities along the lines of what has been done with the municipal council of Libreville and what is currently being established with Shell Gabon and BGD.

30. One of the main thrusts of the execution of this programme will be the mobilization of resources, not only with bilateral and multilateral partners, but also with the Government and the private sector. The results obtained are already encouraging, especially as relates to GFATM, AfDB and the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

31. These efforts will be buttressed by the application of a resource mobilization strategy currently being developed and through enhanced efforts to achieve greater visibility of UNDP support. The capacities of the country office are to be strengthened not only in the area of resource mobilization but also with regard to programme implementation efficiency, so as to guarantee first-rate execution. The development of personnel training is consequently central to this strategy, coupled with the influx of expertise from other offices located abroad or from regional centres.

32. The centres targeted for such resource mobilization are: (a) GFATM (19 million dollars for HIV round 3 and malaria control rounds 4 and 5); (b) the Government, which, apart from its contribution to the operation of the office, has already committed itself to contribute 2 million dollars to the ART GOLD Gabon project; (c) AfDB, with which the current cooperation in the field of governance will be continued; (d) Shell Gabon, with which a memorandum of understanding has been signed for the elaboration and implementation of local development programmes and plans; (e) GEF, in the fields of capacity-building, carbon, soil degradation and national parks.

Monitoring and evaluation

33. Programme monitoring and evaluation will take place in partnership with the Government, the UNS and other development partners (bilateral and multilateral partners, the private sector and civil society) involved in the implementation of this programme. They will be done by means of reviews, audits and the use of certain tools. The Minister in charge of planning will be responsible for coordination, remaining in constant contact with the institutions concerned.

34. Semi-annual progress reports on programmes will be prepared for the Government.

35. Annual programme reviews will be organized simultaneously with follow-up of UNDAF implementation and in conjunction with the periodic DSCRPs so as to provide a picture of the progress made in the achievement of the expected outcomes.

36. Annual project and programme audits will be systematic and compulsory. The programme will be monitored financially by means of the three-year rolling plan for core funds and the results and resource-allocation framework (see annex).

37. One of the preferred tools for monitoring programme outputs will be DevInfo, based on the indicators of the MDGs, the DSCRPs, the medium-term expenditure framework (currently being developed) and demographic and health surveys and those adopted in connection with the Paris Declaration.

Annex

Results and resources framework, 2007-2011

<i>Goals of the multi-year funding framework (MYFF)</i>	<i>Expected country programme outcomes</i>	<i>Expected outputs</i>	<i>Role of partners</i>	<i>Indicative resources in thousands of dollars</i>
Achievement of MDGs and poverty reduction	Outcome 11: Budgetary, fiscal and sectoral policies for the poor are adopted and implemented.	National and local capacities in the area of budgetary and fiscal policy in favour of the poor are strengthened and developed and in phase with the DSCRIP and the MDGs.	Government, UNDP, World Bank, United Nations Volunteers	Regular resources: 550
		The institutional framework and the DSCRIP monitoring and evaluation system are operational and efficient.	Government, UNDP, UNFPA, IMF, World Bank	Other resources: Thematic Trust Fund on Poverty Reduction: 350 Government cost-sharing: 200 AfDB: 500 World Bank: 200
		Strategic and operational programming for poverty reduction and MDG monitoring is strengthened.	Government, UNDP, UNFPA, World Bank, AfDB	
		Instruments of political and public dialogue for the achievement of the MDGs are produced and disseminated and the related reports are circulated.	Government, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, FAO, UNFPA, International Labour Office (ILO), World Bank, UNESCO	
	Outcome 12: The income of poor and vulnerable groups is increased	Outreach microfinance institutions are created and reinforced.	Government, local authorities, UNDP, Shell Gabon, FAO, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	Libreville municipal council: 200 Other municipalities: 300
		Income-generating activities are developed in target areas.	Government, Shell Gabon, UNDP, GEF, UNHCR	Shell Gabon: 450 Poverty Trust Fund: 150

<i>Goals of the multi-year funding framework (MYFF)</i>	<i>Expected country programme outcomes</i>	<i>Expected outputs</i>	<i>Role of partners</i>	<i>Indicative resources in thousands of dollars</i>
	Outcome 13: The most deprived and vulnerable population groups gain access to basic social services.	Community basic social infrastructures are rehabilitated in target areas.	Government, UNDP, UNHCR, territorial communities, FAO	Regular resources: 200 Other resources: Government: 2,700 UNFTS: 600 ART GOLD Internat.: 150
Strengthening democratic governance	Outcome 8: The framework and operation of political and social institutions are improved.	Operational, well-developed modern administrative and financial management tools are made available to administrations.	Government, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF	Regular resources: 305 Other resources: AfDB: 2,000 Thematic Trust Fund on Governance: 250 Thematic Trust Fund on Gender: 350 Government: 300 World Bank: 400 Nordic Fund: 600 ACBF: 400
		The integrated system for the management of socio-economic, demographic and environmental information is improved at all levels (largely by strengthening the capacities of national institutions to collect and make available reliable statistical data).	Government, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, ILO, World Bank	
		The legal framework, organization and operation of civil society are strengthened.	Government, UNDP, AfDB, World Bank, UNFPA	
		A national gender mainstreaming strategy is developed and adopted.	Government, UNDP, UNFPA	
	Outcome 9: Local and community dynamics, including decentralized cooperation, are promoted.	Grass-roots community capacities are strengthened and developed and national programmes for the implementation of development plans include the concerns of vulnerable groups.	Government, local authorities and local elected officials, grass-roots populations, UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO	Regular resources: 225 Other resources: Government: 2,500 United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security: 1,400 ART GOLD Internat.: 350 Thematic Trust Fund on Governance: 350 Shell Gabon: 150

<i>Goals of the multi-year funding framework (MYFF)</i>	<i>Expected country programme outcomes</i>	<i>Expected outputs</i>	<i>Role of partners</i>	<i>Indicative resources in thousands of dollars</i>
	Outcome 10: An efficient, operational ecological monitoring system is set up.	The natural resource strategic framework and the related management capacities are strengthened and the mechanisms for the conservation of ecosystems that support carbon sequestration are developed and put into operation.	Government, local communities and authorities, UNDP, World Bank, FAO, GEF	Regular resources: 100 Other resources: GEF: 1,500
Responses to HIV/AIDS	Outcome 4: Target populations know how to prevent HIV infection.	Young adolescents have access to information on HIV/AIDS.	Government, UNDP/GFATM, UNICEF, UNAIDS, UNHCR, WHO	Regular resources: 100 Other resources: GFATM: 550
		A study of the impact of sociocultural determinants on the fight against HIV/AIDS is carried out and grass-roots-level cultural leaders and actors are informed, sensitized and educated regarding HIV/AIDS prevention.	Government, UNDP, UNAIDS	
	Outcome 5: Access to comprehensive care (medical, economic, nutritional, legal as well as relating to orphans and vulnerable children and the planning and budgetary process) is increased.	Populations at risk (sex professionals, military transport personnel, prisoners) know how to prevent HIV infection.	Government, UNDP/GFATM, WHO, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNAIDS	Regular resources: 50 Other resources: GFATM: 9,750
		Orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS have been identified and provided with nutritional care.	Government, UNDP/GFATM, UNICEF, World Bank	
		Individuals living with HIV or AIDS receive appropriate triple-drug therapy when they need it.	Government, UNDP/GFATM, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNAIDS, WHO	
Outcome 6: Children under 5 years of age and pregnant women receive therapeutic care and protective means against malaria.	(a) Pregnant women identified in four provinces receive intermittent presumptive treatment (IPT); (b) Pregnant women and children under 5 years of age use insecticide-treated mosquito nets.	Government, UNDP/GFATM, WHO, UNICEF	Regular resources: 50 Other resources: GFATM: 7,850	

<i>Goals of the multi-year funding framework (MYFF)</i>	<i>Expected country programme outcomes</i>	<i>Expected outputs</i>	<i>Role of partners</i>	<i>Indicative resources in thousands of dollars</i>
	Outcome 7: Epidemiologic monitoring and information management are improved.	National capacities for collecting data and making them available are strengthened and monitoring of antimalarial drug resistance is provided.	WHO, UNDP/GFATM, UNFPA, UNICEF, AfDB, World Bank, UNAIDS, Government	Regular resources: 100 Other resources: GFATM: 500
	Outcome of UNDP programme: The tools for national coordination of the fight against HIV/AIDS are in place and operational.	Mechanism for national coordination of the fight against HIV/AIDS is in place and operational.	Government, UNDP/GFATM, UNAIDS	Regular resources: 203 Other resources: GFATM: 350 Thematic Trust Fund on Gender: 250
The capacities of NGOs, community associations, religious and community leaders and public institutions are enhanced for the fight against HIV/AIDS.		Government, UNDP/GFATM, UNAIDS		
The leadership of local actors is strengthened to enhance the effectiveness of the fight against HIV/AIDS.		Government, UNDP/GFATM, UNAIDS		