



EVALUATION OF THE

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE Thematic Trust Fund

**COUNTRY
STUDY:
MAURITANIA**

United Nations Development Programme

EVALUATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE Thematic Trust Fund

United Nations Development Programme

COUNTRY STUDY: MAURITANIA

By Bob Boase and Omar Fall

Country case studies were a key part of the evaluation of UNDP's Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund (DGTTF). The evaluation team reviewed and analysed DGTTF projects in eight countries: Bhutan, Bolivia, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania, Mozambique, the Philippines, Sierra Leone and Yemen. This country case study is meant to complement the main text of the evaluation report.

Collectively, the five Mauritania DGTTF projects prove UNDP can make a contribution to the most sensitive and critical aspects of a country's transition toward democracy by creating the political space for dialogue to take place. This is particularly the case for the two most successful projects **Strengthening Dialogue toward reaching the MDGs** and **Women in Elections**. **Strengthening Dialogue toward reaching the MDGs** brought together different political parties and civil society representatives in a neutral arena to discuss the MDGs at a tense political time and was probably only possible because the events were sponsored by the UNDP, which is seen as a neutral

and impartial institution. Of note is that three Mauritania DGTTF projects focused on the MDGs, but at the national level, while the Philippines' DGTTF projects were focused at the city level. An important part of the success of the **Women in Elections** project was UNDP's close collaboration with UNIFEM, UNFPA and UNICEF. Its success can be measured by the fact that more women were elected than planned.

The other two projects, **Nationalization of MDGs** and **Strengthening Governance of Littoral Resources (oil and fisheries) for Reaching MDGs**, also helped with the country's transition to democratic governance but did not meet DGTTF expectations. While it is too soon to draw conclusions about the fifth project, **Strengthening Parliament**, which has only just started, it holds great promise and should therefore make its own contribution in the larger DGTTF effort of helping Mauritania make the fundamental transition to democratic governance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS	3
1. BACKGROUND	4
2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	5
3. PROJECTS OVERVIEW.....	8
3.1 Strengthening Dialogue toward Reaching the MDGs ('Political Dialogue').....	8
3.2 Women in Elections	10
3.3 Nationalization of the MDGs	12
3.4 Strengthening Governance of Littoral Resources for Reaching the MDGs	13
3.5 Parliamentary Strengthening.....	15
4. PEOPLE INTERVIEWED FOR THE MAURITANIA COUNTRY STUDY.....	16

ABBREVIATIONS

APR	Annual Project Report	OGC	Oslo Governance Centre
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery	ProDoc	Project Document
BDP	Bureau for Development Policy	RB(x)	Regional Bureau(x)
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women	SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
CO	Country Office	SL	Service Line
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan	SURF	Sub-Regional Resource Facility
CSO	civil society organization	SWAp	sector-wide approach
Danida	Danish Development Assistance	TOR	terms of reference
DFID	UK Department for International Development	TRAC	target for resource assignment from the core
DGG	Democratic Governance Group	UN	United Nations
DGP	Democratic Governance Practice	UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
DGTTF	Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund	UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
ECIS	Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
EOI	expression of interest	UNDP NY	United Nations Development Programme Office New York
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation	UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
HQ	headquarters	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
HURLITALK	Human Rights Policy Network	UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
ICT	information and communications technology	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency		
LPAC	Local Project Appraisal Committee		
MDG	Millennium Development Goal		
MYFF	multi-year funding framework		
NDI	National Democratic Institute		
NGO	non-governmental organization		
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee		

1. BACKGROUND

Mauritania is going through a critical transition to democratic governance. An attempted coup d'état in June 2003 was followed by a successful one (by the army) in August 2005 and then by a democratic election in March 2007. UNDP's DGTTF played an important role in this transition by fostering a political dialogue at a time when there was none and by helping increase the participation of women in the political process.

Mauritania is suited to the small-scale nature of DGTTF because the local UNDP programme is small (with a budget of just \$6.8 million for 2006–2008), and thus even \$100,000 has made a difference. In short, Mauritania's UNDP Country Office (CO) welcomed DGTTF and wants it to continue and grow.

There are four completed DGTTF projects in Mauritania. While DGTTF as such is not widely known in Mauritania, outside the institutions where it has operated directly, the programme has an important place in the country's transition toward democratic governance. This is particularly the case for two of the projects, Strengthening Dialogue toward Reaching the MDGs and Women in Elections. The other two projects, Nationalization of the MDGs and Strengthening Governance of Littoral Resources for Reaching the MDGs,

also helped with the country's transition to democratic governance but did not meet DGTTF expectations. While it is too soon to draw conclusions about the fifth project, Strengthening Parliament (which has only just started), it holds great promise and should therefore make its own contribution to the larger DGTTF effort of helping Mauritania transition to democratic governance.

The five projects are in sync with the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) and the seven UNDP Democratic Governance Service Lines.

Two DGTTF projects succeeded (Strengthening Dialogue toward Reaching the MDGs and Women in Elections), while two projects (Nationalization of MDGs and Strengthening Governance of Littoral Resources for Reaching the MDGs) did not meet DGTTF expectations. The fifth project (Strengthening Parliament) was underway at the time of this evaluation; it was seen to hold great promise, however. Three of the projects were at the heart of the democratic governance challenge while two were only partially so.

Table 1 below summarizes the five DGTTF projects in Mauritania from 2003 to 2007.

TABLE 1. PROJECT SUMMARIES

PROJECT	OUTCOME	ACTIVITIES	REQUESTED	RECEIVED	SPENT	OTHER RESOURCES	COMMENTS
Nationalization of MDGs (2003)	Nationalization of the MDGs	Plan for nationalizing the MDGs	\$210,000	\$105,000	\$78,442	No	Project was sidelined by presidential election and an attempted coup
Strengthening Dialogue toward Reaching the MDGs (2004)	Creation of political dialogue among parties and civil society around achieving the MDGs	Series of workshops around country	\$223,200	\$143,385	\$123,916	Local bank and French government assistance	Created political dialogue in a tense period
Strengthening Governance of Littoral Resources for Reaching the MDGs (2005)	Raised awareness on issues of exploiting fisheries and oil	Series of workshops	\$210,000	\$210,000	\$161,387	No	Project implemented in the last four months of the year only
Women in Elections (2006)	Election law quota for women and strengthening capacity of women candidates	Training of women candidates	\$250,000	\$175,000	\$161,670	UNICEF and UNFPA	More women elected than the official quota
Strengthening Parliament (2007)	Higher performing parliament	Capacity strengthening				French government assistance	Underway so cannot be evaluated

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Mauritania ‘won’ all five of its DGTTF proposals, making it both active and successful in its DGTTF applications.
- Three of Mauritania’s DGTTF projects were focused on the MDGs at the national level (In the case of the Philippines, three of its projects were focused at the city level). This is both positive and negative. The positive side is that it shows that the DGTTF has the flexibility to approve a series of initiatives toward a much larger result. The negative is that it necessitated three separate applications on the same general topic, the MDGs, which is time-consuming and inefficient both for the applicant and for UNDP NY.
- In the Women in Elections project, UNDP collaborated closely with UNIFEM, UNFPA and UNICEF, a good demonstration of corporate UN behaviour for a greater overall impact. This project also collaborated with GTZ and the National Democratic Institute (NDI).
- The modest financial range of DGTTF projects is appropriate in Mauritania, where the overall UNDP governance programme is relatively small and access to bilateral funds is quite limited. A \$100,000 DGTTF project can make a difference. DGTTF’s funds are greatly welcomed for pilot innovations. UNDP Mauritania prefers the current budget limit of DGTTF that outlines a 75 percent chance of gaining approval, to an alternative regime with larger projects and a correspondingly lower chance of gaining funding approval.
- DGTTF projects are consistent with Mauritania UNDAF and with CPAP. This demonstrates that DGTTF has been advancing the overall UN/UNDP agreed plan for Mauritania.
- Each DGTTF project falls under one of the seven UNDP Democratic Governance Service Lines. All projects fall under the Fostering Inclusive Participation theme of the UNDP Corporate Plan 2008–2011.
- The Mauritanian experience proves that DGTTF can make a meaningful contribution toward the most sensitive and critical aspects of a country’s transition toward democracy—creating space for political dialogue and advocating more women politicians in an Islamic country.
- The compelling importance of a champion to lead the project was exhibited in Mauritania. This person must not only be sufficiently senior to have the necessary authority to implement the project; he or she also must have the vision and drive to make it all happen. DGTTF had such persons in the case of the Political Dialogue project in the shared leadership of an eminent retired diplomat and an experienced UNDP Resident Representative.
- DGTTF proposals must be carefully reviewed for their scope to ensure that they are feasible in the one-year time-frame. None of the four projects could be completed within the DGTTF-required year. This time limit has the negative effect of focusing valuable time and effort on disbursement at the expense of project results, impact and sustainability. The two projects that did not meet DGTTF expectations were completed in just four months. If they had a reasonable amount of implementation time they might have met DGTTF expectations. Sometimes projects cannot be completed in one year because of starting delays stemming from a prolonged internal approval processes either in the UNDP CO or in the Mauritanian partner agency.
- The transaction cost of designing, negotiating and planning DGTTF projects is too great for the amount of money involved. Consensus is that the amount of time spent on DGTTF project development was as much as for a TRAC project.
- There is a close relationship between a TRAC project and the DGTTF Political Dialogue project, which drew in \$115,406 additional money from TRAC funds. Interestingly, the DGTTF project received \$80,000 less than requested so TRAC funding more than made up for the difference.

- In terms of transaction costs of DGTTF projects, the consensus is that development of a DGTTF project takes as much time and effort as a much larger and longer-term TRAC project. The current process is neither efficient nor effective. Ways and means should be explored of shortening and streamlining the application process in order to keep investment of time and energy to a minimum for all stakeholders including the recipient government, the UNDP CO, the RB and UNDP NY.
 - The creation of a separate programming stream for such small individual projects would seem to work against the spirit of the Paris Declaration. One solution may be for UNDP NY to give approval in principle, conditional on getting government buy-in. For this small budget, it should be possible for UNDP RB or NY to review quickly and approve individual projects, perhaps with a phone call or email to clear up any questions in the proposal. This
- new process of approvals combined with an open call schedule would make DGTTF much more agile, responsive to local needs and opportunities, and more successful over all.
- In the spirit of the Paris Declaration, it may be useful to examine giving project approval to the individual CO and do away with the UNDP NY need to approve each project.
 - DGTTF is slotted into an annual call for proposals by UNDP NY. It would be preferable if COs were allowed to make their proposal at any point in the year to take advantage of critical windows of opportunity that do not fit into annual calls for DGTTF proposals. Options for shifting to on-demand proposals for COs should be explored.
 - COs and recipient governments would benefit from more clearly defined criteria as to what DGTTF is looking for in its projects. This would likely reduce

TABLE 2: PROJECT PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

PROJECT	INNOVATIVE	MOBILIZED FUNDS	CATALYTIC	UNDP COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE	PARTNERSHIPS WITH DONORS	PARTNERSHIPS WITH GOVERNANCE INSTITUTIONS	GENDER	CIVIL SOCIETY	HUMAN RIGHTS
Nationalization of MDGs (2003)	No	No	No	UN is architect of MDG concept	No	Ministry of Economy and Finance	Yes	Yes	Yes
Strengthening Dialogue toward Reaching the MDGs (2004)	Created political dialogue among opposing parties at sensitive time	From local bank & French government	Yes	UNDP seen as neutral convener in a sensitive political situation	No	Ministry of Economy and Finance	Yes	Yes	Yes
Strengthening Governance of Littoral Resources for Reaching MDGs (2005)	Yes	No	No	UNDP seen as neutral convener in a sensitive political situation	No	Ministry of Economy and Finance	No	No	No
Women in Elections (2006)	Yes	Yes	Yes	UNDP seen as neutral partner to work on elections	Yes, BCPR, UNFPA and UNICEF	Secretariat for Women	Yes	Yes	Yes
Strengthening Parliament (2007)	No	Yes	Yes	UNDP seen as neutral partner by parliament	No	Parliament	Yes	Yes	Yes

the number of rejected projects and would reduce risk of failure of approved projects. At the heart of this review would be an exercise to develop the definitions of success as being 'innovative, catalytic and strategic.'

- The DGTTF and TRAC relationship should be clarified. The Political Dialogue project benefited from \$115,000 of TRAC funding. This more than compensated for the \$80,000 shortfall between the amount requested and approved for the DGTTF project. DGTTF policy could benefit by describing which TRAC relationships are acceptable and which not.
- The APR is not a valid project evaluation instrument. There needs to be a more professional, objective approach to evaluating DGTTF projects so that lessons are learned and shared among countries and regions. Currently, COs are reluctant to admit failure and to use the experience to learn; thus, the tendency is to describe all projects as successes in the APR. The Women in Elections project had an official independent evaluation carried out by a national gender consultant paid for within the DGTTF budget. The report was circulated to all stakeholders and its recommendations have already been acted on. This may be one way of proceeding in future.

3. PROJECTS OVERVIEW

This section contains summaries of evaluations of the four completed projects.

3.1 Strengthening Dialogue toward Reaching the MDGs ('Political Dialogue')

Results: Project was largely successful despite a politically tense and potentially dangerous national political situation

UNDP Core Democratic Service Line:

Policy Support for Governance

UNDP Corporate Plan 2008–2011 Theme:

Fostering Inclusive Participation

Start/end date: April–December 2004

Amount requested: \$223, 200

Amount approved: \$143, 385.95

Amount spent: \$123, 916.65

UNDP project context:

A failed coup d'état in 2003 made the political situation tense and there was little or no discussion among the political parties. The party then in power employed strong-arm tactics so that opposition parties were reluctant to register their views in public, the press was subject to censorship, and there were high levels of mistrust throughout society. It was important not to let the situation deteriorate further. UNDP saw an opportunity to bring politicians and senior officials together around the MDGs. The ruling tried to block this project at the local approval committee. UNDP negotiated with the government and found a way around the issue by changing the project title to focus on reaching the MDGs.

Project purpose:

The purpose of the project was to provide a neutral forum for a series of nine workshops between August and November 2004. The discussions brought together politicians from different parties, senior officials, representatives from civil society and experts to discuss how to reach the MDGs and the future of key economic sectors. In the process, media coverage made citizens more aware of the issues involved in achieving the MDGs.

Planned project outputs achieved:

Key outputs were achieved in this project, and are as follows:

- three regional workshops in the north, east and south of the country to discuss and build consensus on reaching the MDGs
- a mid-term workshop to take stock of the previous workshops and decide on the next steps
- a national workshop synthesizing regional workshop outcomes, setting strategies to reaching the MDGs and focusing on national political reconciliation
- three workshops in Nouakchott focusing on the economy, fishing and mining, and oil and gas
- a final workshop in Nouakchott that called for a liberalization of the media, better transparency in the management of the country's resources, a strengthened resolve on the struggle against poverty, and equity in the distribution of national assets and services
- an electronic forum established whereby individuals can visit the Web site and make their views known on any of the workshop topics
- a general set of responsibilities for achieving the MDGs assigned to relevant ministries

The workshops were on Mauritanian TV and in the press and generated a lot of public interest and debate. At first, the party then in power did not want to participate but when they saw the criticism being registered by opposition parties they changed their minds and felt they had to be at the workshops to defend their position. Perhaps the most important outcome of the workshops was that they created an atmosphere of discussion, negotiation and consensus building among all stakeholders including an array of civil society organizations. UNDP being the host gave all participants the confidence and opening to make their points of view known and this promoted a genuine dialogue on the MDGs. The workshops enhanced the profiles of numerous participants who have since either been promoted or have become elected officials.

Innovative nature of the project:

Bringing together different political parties and civil society representatives in a neutral arena to discuss the MDGs at a time when there was almost no dialogue was particularly innovative. This was probably only possible because the events were sponsored by the UNDP, which was seen as a neutral and impartial institution.

Catalytic nature of the project:

The project was catalytic in the following ways:

- it broke the ice between different political parties and stakeholders who sat down to discuss their differing points of view without the event deteriorating into chaos. In this sense, it had a catalytic effect in starting a national dialogue toward building consensus and a national vision for the country
- it inspired the Forum on Democratic Values organized by the political parties, civil society and the media in April 2005. This forum clarified the responsibilities and duties of the parties in power and those in opposition, and the statement's recommendations were implemented
- it is possible that the national consultation days organized by the military for justice and democracy, in October 2005, were inspired by the approach taken in this project.
- it inspired The Mauritania vision 2030 initiative
- The Political Dialogue project is significant because it perhaps warded off an impasse between the party in power and the opposition parties by providing an impartial arena for dialogue; without this, there was a risk of a deteriorating situation and no opening for dialogue after the second coup d'état
- UNDP project staff assisted neighbouring countries in facilitating political dialogue—such as in Togo, on the eve of that country's October 2007 parliamentary elections.
- The project mobilized funding from the National Bank of Mauritania (\$12,967) and the French Government (\$10,911), which wanted more visibility by being associated with this successful endeavour
- Several participants in the workshops took up political careers or have taken on more senior posts in the government administration

Sustainability of the project:

Sustainability is the weak part of this project at least in terms of building momentum toward the MDGs; that is because there was no instrument to follow up with the various ministries on implementing their MDG responsibilities. There was no official publication and distribution of the proceedings—or any media coverage—which made it difficult to disseminate the conclusions and recommendations of the project. The electronic forum soon fell dormant and people ceased to interact with it. But one important continuing impact has been new interest and engagement in political dialogue.

Adequacy of one-year time-frame:

The implementation time-frame of one year proved to be short particularly given that the project did not get underway until April, which left only nine months for its completion. Project management did a remarkable job given the compressed time available.

Value of the project:

No one can say for sure what might have happened without this project at this particularly tense political time in recent Mauritanian history. But it is certain that this project proved it is possible to engage in an open dialogue among political parties without resorting to violence. It also seems evident that this experience has helped create a culture of open dialogue within the new government.

Success drivers of the project:

The co-chairs of the workshops, one an eminent retired Mauritanian diplomat and the other an experienced UNDP Resident Representative, are largely responsible for leading this project to high achievement; they volunteered to co-chair the political dialogue project strictly because it was sponsored by UNDP and not by a bilateral arrangement or by the EU. The UNDP guaranteed an impartiality and neutrality that other donors cannot provide.

The project involved numerous civil society organizations (CSOs); women were present and made their views known.

3.2 Women in Elections

Results: Exceeded its objectives

UNDP Core Democratic Service Line:

Electoral Systems and Processes

UNDP Corporate Plan 2008–2011 Theme:

Fostering Inclusive Participation

Start/end date: July 2006–January 2007

Amount requested: \$250,000

Amount approved: \$175,000

Amount spent: \$161,670

UNDP project context:

This project is based on Mauritanian ratification of CEDAW. The status of women in the country is characterized by inequality, with high illiteracy and poverty rates, poor access to resources and ignorance of basic rights. Traditionally, women have not played a prominent political role in Mauritania. Prior to this project, women comprised only 3.5 percent of parliament and municipal seats; 12.5 percent of ministries; only one mayor out of 216; less than 7 percent of high-ranking government positions; and one woman party leader out of 35 registered.

In August 2005, during the national consultation days, UNDP saw an opportunity to support a nascent movement for a quota for women parliamentarians. UNDP was able to gain support from a number of UN agencies (UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA) to launch a joint initiative to support greater participation of women in political and senior official positions given the following factors: upcoming parliamentary and municipal elections; the scheduled national consultation days which were advocating a women's quota of 20 percent in the parliament; strong political will of the then government; and active mobilization of women and community-based organizations. GTZ and NDI also collaborated in this initiative, bringing a corporate donor approach to ensuring more women were elected.

The November 2006 national election was a critical event in Mauritania's transition to democratic governance. DGTTF supported an initiative establishing a quota of 10 percent of the seats in the National Assembly to be reserved for women. The results of the initiative exceeded expectations: Women now comprise 17 deputies out of 95 (18 percent), far above the 10 percent targeted in the law; 9 out of 38 Senate seats (also 18 percent); and 1,120 city

councillors out of 3,688 (more than 30 percent). (The third outcome was largely the result of a provision in the law requiring that all deputy mayors be women.)

This project was late, like most DGTTF projects. It was signed in April 2006 but actually did not start until July 2006, which left only seven months to complete the project, which rolled over into January 2007.

Project purpose:

Project objectives were the following:

- push for promulgation of an election law specifying a women's quota for parliament;
- assist women in their election campaigns for the senate, the parliament and municipal posts, by strengthening their capacities and developing their confidence and interest in stronger political participation.

Planned project outputs and degree achieved:

All of the following planned outputs were completed except the workshop, which was found to be unnecessary:

- A study on quotas was undertaken; the results provided support for the adoption of the law mandating a quota for women in government.
- A study visit was made to Morocco to consider socio-cultural constraints and lessons learned.
- Project activities focused on political leaders and national media, to organize campaigns in Nouakchott and four other districts aimed at raising awareness on the law regarding the quota for women. Religious *ullamahs* participated in these gatherings in support of this quota.
- A meeting in Nouakchott with the media promoted the concept of women leaders and their candidacy in the election.
- The project's main output was the adoption of the law on a women's quota and its implementation.
- Public meetings and public talks were held in four districts during September and October. Specially trained individuals moderated the meetings.
- An important media campaign promoting the idea of women political candidates was launched in August 2006 under the patronage of the prime minister.

- Training carried out by UNIFEM with the assistance of the DGTTF project focused on preparing male and female candidates in September in Nouakchott and in October in four other districts; in total, 200 women were trained, including 27 political leaders and 26 opinion leaders.

STAKEHOLDERS	NUMBER	TRAINING THEMES
Community-based organizations (civil society)	30	130 techniques Electoral sensitization
Imams and journalists	26	Advocacy techniques
Advocacy individuals	50	Advocacy techniques
Political parties	27	Integrated approach to gender equality
Trainers	12	Gender and elections
Parliament candidates Municipality councillors	> 200	Staff development Campaign techniques Personal advice
Parliament candidates	11	Parliament and municipalities functioning
Municipality councillors	> 140	Approaches to decision-making

- An electoral clinic was opened a week before the opening electoral campaign to provide local assistance to candidates.
- The evaluation of the Women in Elections project was carried out and paid for out of the TTF budget. It was conducted by a Mauritanian woman and cost only \$2,000 to \$3,000.

The impact was successful, as shown in the following table:

PROJECT'S IMPACT ON WOMEN ELECTED

ELECTED POSTS	TOTAL SEATS	NUMBER OF WOMEN (2005)	% WOMEN	NUMBER OF WOMEN (2007)	% WOMEN	PROJECT OBJECTIVE
Municipal councillors	3,688	114	3	1,12	30.37	10
Mayors	216	1	0,4	4	1.85	—
National Assembly	95	3	3,16	17	17.89	10
Senate	53	2	3,57	9	17	10

Innovative nature of the project:

The project was innovative in the following ways:

- it dealt with a sensitive topic where there was much resistance in some traditional quarters in the society. The project helped bring about a fundamental change. Indeed, political parties and civil society representatives together decided to discuss the gender issue of the MDGs to gain more votes; this was particularly innovative and was probably only possible because these events were sponsored by UNDP, which was seen as a neutral and impartial institution
- it involved all stakeholders, including the *ullamahs*, to explain to people that there was no barrier in Islam to women in political positions
- unlike most DGTTF projects, this project was given a formal evaluation carried out under contract by an independent consultant—a Mauritanian woman expert on gender. The recommendations of this evaluation were acted on. This shows the value of a more formal evaluation at least for some DGTTF projects
- the innovative character of this project is based on the idea of a quota for women, a very new idea in Mauritania's political context

Catalytic nature of the project:

The project was catalytic in that it achieved the following:

- advocated for a women's quota began before DGTTF by a women's advocacy group led by six women intellectuals who were in contact with all donors and with the National Democratic Institute (NDI); DGTTF enlarged the scope and accelerated the notion of women in political position
- brought together four UN organizations (UNDP, UNIFEM, UNFPA and UNICEF) along with the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and NDI in a coordinated effort for greater overall impact
- can take some credit for the upgrading of the Secretariat of Women to a full ministry post after the election. The new entity is the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and Youth. It also has greater resources than its predecessor body, thereby ensuring continued attention to the issue of women in politics

Sustainability of the project:

- The Secretariat for Women was upgraded to a full ministry with increased resources, which ensures continued attention to the issue of women in politics.
- The current DGTTF project for 2007 is a follow-on of this project in the sense that it provides women deputies with training as part of an effort to strengthen their engagement and impact.
- GTZ and the Spanish government are now heavily involved in the training of elected women and men at the municipal level.

Adequacy of one-year time-frame:

Project implementation had to be squeezed into the last six months and rolled over into January 2007. The time-frame was too short to properly capacitate elected women, particularly in rural areas.

Value of the project:

Without the DGTTF project such high numbers of women would not have been elected in the 2006 elections and democratic governance in Mauritania would be less advanced than it is.

Success drivers of the project:

The main success drivers of the project were

- a cooperating and coordinated donor community for this project;
- inclusion of all important stakeholders, such as the *ullamahs*;
- maximum use of the media to get the message across.

3.3 Nationalization of the MDGs

Results: Met DGTTF expectations

UNDP Core Democratic Service Line:

Policy Support for Democratic Governance

UNDP Corporate Plan 2008–2011 Theme:

Fostering Inclusive Participation

Start/end date: September–December 2003

Amount requested: \$210,000

Amount approved: \$105,000

Amount spent: \$78,442

UNDP project context:

Mauritania is not on track to achieve a number of the MDGs, thus the importance of improving performance in the remaining years until 2015. The project, while important, was sidelined to some extent by the presidential election and an attempted coup d'état.

Project purpose:

The project was meant to help the Government of Mauritania take charge of achieving the MDGs.

Planned project outputs:

The project outputs were a plan for nationalizing the MDGs focused on key ministries and agencies responsible for different MDGs and linked to anti-poverty and human development efforts; and adjustment of the national statistics system to improve its ability to measure the MDGs.

Adequacy of one-year time-frame:

The project, in retrospect, was too ambitious for a one-year undertaking. The project was stalled by political events, with the result that it only had the final three months of 2003 for its execution. The task of bringing stakeholders to understand the MDGs and their various targets is by itself a major undertaking, not to mention putting together a national plan for the same and adjusting the national statistics system to capture MDG target information. Given the above constraints, the project stakeholders who had wanted a two-year time-frame made a tremendous effort in just three months.

Innovative and catalytic nature of the project:

The project was not innovative in the sense that Mauritania was already making plans to achieve the MDGs, but the project was able to integrate MDGs into the World Bank-led PRSP; two follow-up reports on the MDGs have

been produced; two MDG-related parliamentary groups were established; civil society and journalists were sensitized; and the capacity of the administration to address the MDGs was strengthened.

Sustainability of the project:

The project appointed an MDG focal point in relevant ministries, but this person was not resourced or mandated and the concept died. An annual MDG report was to be prepared by the government in 2008, which would keep attention on the topic and use national statistics to the extent possible to measure progress toward the MDGs. The ongoing PRSP led by the World Bank also maintains a focus on reaching the MDGs. The government adopted a plan for the environment presented by NGOs. This means that achieving the environmental MDG is likely to be successful.

Value of the project:

Without this DGTTF project, the MDGs would not have been as understood by senior officials and would not have been integrated into the PRSP. In addition, the process of adjusting the national statistics to enable MDG measurement would not have begun.

Assessment of the project:

- The project was able to help stakeholders understand the MDGs and to have them integrated to some extent in the World Bank-led PRSP. The 2006 PRSP notes that 'PRSP is now aligned with the MDGs but the strategy remains vague on the critical policies needed to achieve the ambitious MDGs.'
- The national statistical system has been adjusted to some extent to focus on and measure MDG indicators and parameters.
- Two study tours, to Morocco and Senegal, were organized for 17 persons—parliamentarians, university staff, civil society representatives, and government officials—to observe the experience of other countries.
- The entire thrust of the project was top-down, when in reality the MDGs are as much a bottom-up exercise. But this fact was not reflected in the project design.

- The project included three regional thematic workshops (Health, Water and Sanitation [in Rosso]; Education, Youth, and Culture [in Kiffa]; and Justice, Human Rights and Citizenship [in Atar]); a national wrap-up workshop on strategies toward reaching MDGs in Nouakchott; and two studies conducted by foreign consultants introducing the importance of focusing media attention on the MDGs and their integration into the relevant sectors, e.g., education.
- The project helped strengthen CSOs and give them a voice at the table; the then government was not entirely happy with this, but it did not try to block it.
- There are now 95 environmental NGOs working on 85 environmental projects. Mauritania is expected to reach its environmental MDG and the project helped in this respect.
- There was little footprint of this project at the beginning of this evaluation due to the absence of the UNDP focal point for the project. Nonetheless, there was information and evidence that this project succeeded to some extent, according to the director of studies and development policies at the Ministry of Economy and Finance, who was involved in the project at the time.
- The project did an admirable job in the three months in which it was implemented, but the scope was far too ambitious for a DGTTF project—even if it had been permitted a full 12 months for implementation. On that basis, the evaluation concludes that the project did not meet DGTTF expectations.

3.4 Strengthening Governance of Littoral Resources for Reaching the MDGs

Results: Did not meet DGTF expectations

UNDP Core Democratic Service Line:

Public Administration Reform and Anti-corruption

UNDP Corporate Plan 2008–2011 Theme:

Fostering Inclusive Participation

Start/end date: September–December 2005

Amount requested: \$210,000

Amount approved: \$210,000

Amount spent: \$161,387

UNDP project context:

Due to the tense political situation after a June 2003 attempted coup d'état and concern over the then government in power and its management of the nascent oil industry, discussion of oil was taboo; there was also concern that offshore oil exploitation threatened fish resources and the Arguin National Park's rich biodiversity. This project provided a neutral arena for discussion of exploiting oil and fisheries in a sustainable manner toward MDG achievement.

Project purpose:

The purpose of the project was to raise awareness and understanding of the complex and conflicting issues at stake in the dual exploitation of oil and fisheries.

Planned project outputs:

The outputs of this project are as follows:

- A workshop was held on Sectors policies and perspectives to meet the MDGs, on the themes of growth and potential destabilization caused by oil and gas exploitation; integrating the mining sector into the national economy; and an overview and perspective of the fisheries sector, looking towards 2015.
- A national forum was held in Nouakchott with the assistance of the Sub-Regional Resource Facility (SURF) to discuss a participatory approach to plans for oil/fisheries management. Four studies were conducted on the following topics: (1) oil exploitation based on the theme of 'sustainable development of the oil resource'. The study, conducted by an international consultant, looked at the issue from a financial

management perspective so as to ensure the revenues went into development. The study was shared with the government and the World Bank, and the government is now developing a strategy based on this study; (2) fisheries exploitation, conducted by an international consultant. The study was shared with government and a strategy was prepared by the government for sustainable management of the fisheries; (3) how Mauritania can avoid the 'Dutch disease' (the negative economic impacts of natural resources development) conducted by an international anthropologist; and (4) fishing villages, and how to reach MDGs while limiting oil pollution that would threaten fishing resources;

- A workshop was held in Paris for high-level Mauritanian officials to discuss management of oil and fisheries in a sustainable manner.
- One planned activity regarding a pilot experience on local development based and inspired by MDGs at a coastal village level was not implemented.

Innovative nature of the project:

- This project dared to and succeeded in fostering a dialogue on the sensitive topics of oil and fisheries management at a time when these topics were taboo.
- The challenge for Mauritania during the oil discovery period was daunting because it had no experience in the oil industry and no support to address the many issues raised by multinational companies with which it was negotiating. The project's study of resource management helped set the framework by which the government could avoid economic and social tensions over its natural resources.

Strategic nature of the project:

- It linked resources governance, democratic governance and henceforth, civil peace and prevention of conflicts and tension.
- It strengthened Mauritania's capacity to avoid the 'Dutch disease' that has plagued so many oil exporting countries.
- It made Mauritania aware of the potential conflicts between offshore oil exploitation and the fisheries.

Catalytic nature of the project:

- The project fostered other funding initiatives including integrating the MDGs into the PRSP, with financing by the government; the MDGs Parliamentary Group, financed by the private sector; the Operational Policy for Oil Sector based on the project results, financed by the World Bank; and the replicable nature of the sociologic study, financed by the World Bank in its Country Assessment Strategy.
- The project contributed to the 2006 fisheries agreement with the European Union (EU), which is far more advantageous to Mauritania. Since 1 August 2006, a total of 160 EU boats were authorized to fish in Mauritanian waters in exchange for a yearly payment by the EU of 86 million euros (\$135 million) in addition to fees and taxes averaging 22 million euros per year, plus financing infrastructure repair, and modernization and surveillance assistance.

Sustainability of the project:

The project operated for only the four final months of 2005, so to ask for sustainability is unrealistic. When members of the evaluation team went to interview the key contact in the Ministry of Petroleum, neither the individual nor his colleagues had any recollection of the project. Moreover, there was no evidence that the studies produced by the project were published and distributed. Had this project had a full year for its implementation, it is possible that it would have had more of an impact, including sustainability.

Adequacy of one-year time-frame:

This was an imaginative and innovative project. Proper stewardship of oil and gas and the fisheries are critical to Mauritania's socio-economic development. Unfortunately, the project had only four months for its implementation with the result that emphasis was placed on the seminars and studies with little time for sustainability considerations.

The project was seriously delayed due to internal approvals in the Government of Mauritania and was not signed off until June 2005. Implementation was slowed by the coup d'état that followed in August. The result was that project implementation had to be squeezed into a four-month period from September to December 2005. The subject of this project, oil and fisheries, is vast in itself with its eco-

nomic, ecological, social and political dimensions, so the project could only take a first cut. Yet, the project completed an impressive list of outputs in just four months.

Value of the project:

Without this DGTTF project, the three studies would not have been undertaken and Mauritania would not perhaps have had the awareness to be prepared for negotiation with EU. Also, there would not have been any understanding of how to manage offshore oil and fisheries resources in a sustainable manner.

3.5 Parliamentary Strengthening

This project is just getting under way and therefore cannot be evaluated at this time. The project supports the Parliament in exercising its functions through strengthening the capacities of parliamentarians and the administrative staff of the Parliament, particularly the Senate, and formulating a plan for overall development of the parliament in the medium term, which will enable parliament to mobilize resources and partners for its development;

Moreover, this new DGTTF project has attracted a group of women who want a quota (of 20 percent) for women in senior official positions, similar to what was done prior to the 2006 parliamentary elections. This project offers general training to men and women, and specific training for women in some areas. The new project does not include training of mayors and deputy mayors, but GTZ and the Spanish government are working on this in some regions of the country. Meanwhile, the World Bank has begun gender training for both men and women elected officials.

Currently, the international partners supporting the Parliament are principally GTZ and NDI. Their contributions have been important, notably in training and study tours. More recently, the Francophone Organization has declared its support to use 'nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication' in the two parliamentary houses—a project it is offering to launch with UNDP.

4. PEOPLE INTERVIEWED FOR THE MAURITANIA COUNTRY STUDY

Civil society

Mohamed Said Ould Homody, Chairperson, Strengthening Dialogue toward Reaching the MDGs Steering Committee

Banemou Ould Taylor, Member, DGTTF Women & Elections Steering Committee

Abdallahmane El Yessa, DGTTF Coordinator of the Political Dialogue & Women in 2006 Election DGTTF project

Government

Sidi Mohamed Ould Baidy, Legal Advisor, Ministry of Promoting Women, Childhood, and Family

Khattou mint Baham, Member, DGTTF Women & Elections Steering Committee

Mouhamedou Youssouf Diagana, Secretary General, Ministry of Economy & Finance

Moussa Gandéga, General Secretary, Ministry of Promoting Women, Childhood, and Family

Fatimetou mint Khattri, Minister of Promoting Women, Childhood, and Family

Mohamed Ali Ould Lemrabott, Programme Officer, DGTTF Natural Resources and MDG Nationalization

Amadou Sall, Member, DGTTF Women & Elections Steering Committee

International donors

Salma mint Akhyarhoum, Gender Expert, German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ)

Françoise Gianviti, Director, French Cooperation Service
Olga Ivanov, Programme Officer, European Union

UN system

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Mohamed Ould Abba, MDG Nationalization Programme Manager

Lam Moktar Alhousseynou, Governance Thematic Unit Leader

Bouyagui Cissoko, Programme Assistant (Accounting)

Harouna Niang, Programme Assistant (Accounting)

Alessandra Pellizzeri, Women in Elections Programme Manager

Narjess Saidane, Deputy Resident Representative

Hassan Ould Zein, Programme Officer, DGTTF

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Brahim Ould Isselmou, Communication Programme Officer

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Mohamed Lemine Salem Ould Moujtaba, Director of Policy Population and Development Programme



United Nations Development Programme
Democratic Governance Group
Bureau for Development Policy
304 East 45th Street, Tenth Floor, New York, NY 10017 USA

www.undp.org