

**IMMEDIATE
ATTENTION**

EBD/08/84

August 8, 2008

To: Members of the Executive Board

From: The Secretary

Subject: **Republic of Congo—Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper**

Attached for the **information** of Executive Directors is the poverty reduction strategy paper prepared by the government of the Republic of Congo. At the time of circulation of this paper to the Board, the Secretary's Department has received a communication from the authorities of the Republic of Congo indicating that they consent to the Fund's publication of this paper. It is intended to post this paper on the Fund's external website after **Friday, August 15, 2008**.

Questions may be referred to Mr. York (ext. 36895), Mr. Bessaha (ext. 38763), and Ms. Karpowicz (ext. 37007) in AFR.

Unless the Documents Section (ext. 36760) is otherwise notified, the document will be transmitted, in accordance with the procedures approved by the Executive Board and with the appropriate deletions, to the WTO Secretariat on Monday, August 18, 2008; and to the African Development Bank, the European Commission, the Food and Agriculture Organization, and the United Nations Development Programme.

This document will shortly be posted on the extranet, a secure website for Executive Directors and member country authorities.

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REPUBLIC OF CONGO
*Unity * Labor * Progress*

NATIONAL POVERTY REDUCTION COMMITTEE

PERMANENT TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT



Final Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

March 31, 2008

Abbreviations

ACI	Congolese News Agency
ACIS	Advance Cargo Information System
APRM	Accelerated Participatory Research Method
ARV	Anti-Retrovirals
BCS	Basic Community Services
BEAC	Bank of Central African States
BISOC	Congo Social Review
CDLP	Departmental Poverty Reduction Committee
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEEAC	Economic Community of Central African States
CEMAC	Central African Economic and Monetary Community
CEmOC	Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric Care
CFCO	Congo-Ocean Railway
CLLP	Local Poverty Reduction Committee
CNLP	National Poverty Reduction Committee
CNLS	National AIDS Council
CNSEE	National Center of Statistics and Economic Surveys
COBAC	Central African Banking Commission
CODIR	Steering Committee (Hospitals)
COGES	Management Committee (Hospitals)
COMEG	Central Purchasing Authority for Pharmaceuticals
COOPEC	Savings and Loan Cooperatives
COSA	Health Committee (Hospitals)
COSAME	Cooperation and Support for Craftspersons et Micro-enterprises of the South
CSI	Comprehensive Health Centers
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CT	Technical Unit
DCMCE	Central Directorate of Government Procurement and Contracts
DDP	Departmental Directorate of Planning
DDR	Demobilization, Disarmament et Reintegration
DDS	Departmental Directorate of Statistics
DEP	Director of Research and Planning
DGE	General Directorate of Economy
DGPD	General Directorate of Planning and Development
DGPOP	Directorate General for Population
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DOT	Directly Observable Treatment strategy
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECOM	Congolese Household Survey
EITI	Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative
EmOC	Base Emergency Obstetric Care
EmONC	Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care
EPI	Expanded Program on Immunization
ESAP	Economic and Social Action Program
ESAP	Enhanced Structural Adjustment Program
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FEAMT	Transport Equipment and Material Procurement Fund
FMI	International Monetary Fund
FOB	Free On Board
FODEC	Community Development Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIR	Gross Intake Rate
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
I - PRSP	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
ICEM	Civic and Moral Education
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
IEC/CBC	Information, Education and Communication/Communication for Behavior Change
IGAs	Income-Generating Activities
ILO	International Labor Organization
IPCP	Interim Post-Conflict Program
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
KAP	Knowledge Aptitude Practices
KAP Survey	Knowledge Aptitude Practices Survey
LMD	Bachelor's-Master's-PhD
MASSAHMGF	Ministry of Social Affairs, Solidarity, Humanitarian Action, Wounded War Veterans, and the Family
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals

MEFB	Ministry de the Economy, Finances and Budget
MFI	Microfinance Institution
MPATIEN	Ministry of Planning, Land Development, Economic Integration and NEPAD
MTBF	Medium-Term Budgetary Framework
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
MUCODEC	Congolese Mutual Savings and Loan Association
N.A.	Not Reported
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NICTs	New Information and Communication Technologies
NIU	Single Identification Number
NSAs	Non-State Actors
NTP	National Transport plan
OCER	Congolese Road Maintenance Office
OEPT	Equatorial Postal and Telecommunications Office
OHADA	Organisation for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa
OIF	International Organization of Francophonie
ON-DHD	National Observatory for Sustainable Human Development
ONPT	National Posts and Telecommunications Office
OVC	Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children
PAPN	Pointe-Noire Autonomous Port
PARESO	Economic and Social Recovery Program
PASCOB	Project to Support the Health System in Congo Brazzaville
PID	Provision for Diversified Investment
PMRU	Micro-Performance Program in Urban Areas
PNAE	National Environmental Action Plan
PNDS	National Health Development Program
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment
PPDS	Multiyear Statistical Development Program
PRAEBASE	Program of Support for Basic Education
PRGF	Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSSA	Special Program for Food security
RESEN	Progress Report on the National Education System
RGPH	General Population and Housing Census
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SMEs-SMIs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises/Small and Medium-sized Industries
SNAT	National Land Use Development Plan
SNDE	National Water Distribution Company
SNE	National Electricity Company
SNPC	National Petroleum Company of Congo
SOPECO	Congolese Postal and Savings Company
SOTELCO	Congo Telecommunications Company
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
STP	Permanent Technical Secretariat
SYSTAF/UGE	Automatic Tax System/Large Enterprise Units
TBS	Gross School enrolment Rate
TCA	Turnover Tax
THIS	Common External Tariff
TIPAC	Inter-State Transit for Central African countries
TSGs	Thematic and Sectoral Groups
TVA	Value Added Tax
TVE	Technical and Vocational Education
UDEAC	Customs Union of Central African States
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VRD	Roads and Utility Services
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme

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Government Declaration

After the ceasefire agreements concluded in 1999 with the various rebel factions, the government endeavored to restore a climate conducive to a complete return to peace and security—to earlier stability and development policies—to put in place the basic principles of good governance (free elections, establishment of democratic institutions and the rule of law), and to restore the economic and social infrastructures that had been deeply damaged. The preparation and implementation of the Interim Post-Conflict Program (PIPC 2000-2002) in the same period enabled the country to return to a level of basic infrastructure necessary for improving the living conditions of the people, creating the conditions for the country's return to the international financial community, and restoring its credibility.

In 2002, the organization of commune-level, legislative, senatorial, and presidential elections enabled the country to again have democratic institutions after five years of transition. During the transition phase, the challenge was to bring the Congolese together in broadened and organized solidarity, to put them on the path to peace and security, to solidly lay the foundations for reconstruction, to restore Congo to its place in Africa and the world, and to re-launch the economy and the democratic process.

This reconstruction effort has been carried out gradually under the social project of the President of the Republic known as “The New Hope”, which proposes building a sustainable peace, improving the organization of political activity in a viable and stable institutional setting, promoting a dynamic, modern, and prosperous economy, guaranteeing each and every Congolese national security, well-being, and social justice, and building a nation that is stable, generous, characterized by solidarity, and open to the world.

Special efforts have been made by the government in the various areas of activity, in order to put its proposals into action. This explains the preparation of the program supporting basic education and Education for All, a convergence plan for forestry, a national environmental plan, a master plan for industrial development, and a national territorial development scheme. With a view to developing infrastructures and better organizing the fields of commerce, mining, labor and the working environment, the national transport plan, the commercial code, the mining code and the labor code were also drawn up. As regards health and to ensure sound diets rich in micronutrients, the government has developed a national health development plan and a special food security program. Pursuit of a program under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility will make it possible to consolidate the gains made in the area of the economy and finance.

The government has made improving the living conditions of the people one of its major concerns. Accordingly, the Head of State entered into commitments at the international level as regards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); to this end, the government is receiving support from its development partners and civil society. Thus, the commitments made by the Head of State at the international level as regards achieving admission to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative enabled the country to look forward to debt reduction and hence to work on preparing its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). This strategy paper, drawn up by Congo, is the country's sole intervention framework as regards development. Prepared using a participatory process involving stakeholders from the public and private administrations, civil society organizations and grassroots communities, it will place special emphasis during implementation on the principles of inclusion and expression that so characterized its preparation; this was also the

case for the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP), approved in December 2004 by the Executive Boards of the IMF and the World Bank. Thanks to the efforts put forward by the government in implementing structural reforms under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility, Congo reached the decision point for the I-HIPC in March 2006.

The government hereby reaffirms its commitment to engage in actions in favor of sustainable growth with a view to reducing poverty, while continuing the structural reforms necessary to bring the country toward the completion point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative; the latter will enable Congo to benefit from additional resources resulting from debt settlement that will be devoted to the pro-poor sectors.

The government is pleased by the massive participation of the people, civil society, and development partners at the various levels of the PRSP preparation process, and reiterates its commitment always to seek the involvement of all stakeholders not only in the preparation, but in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and future revision of the PRSP.

The government therefore takes this opportunity to extend its deepest thanks to all the members of the National Poverty Reduction Committee, to the development partners, and to civil society for the devotion and diligence shown by all in the finalization of a Paper of considerable value for our country. Finally, to the Congolese women and men from all over who took part in the process of preparing this paper, the government expresses the gratitude of the Nation as a whole. It invites them to continue to demonstrate their self-sacrifice and commitment, so that together we can meet the challenges of poverty, and thereby pass on a free, united, and prosperous Congo to future generations.

The final Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, validated by all the stakeholders involved in its preparation on March 30, 2008, has some shortcomings in respect of the preparation of the Medium-Term Expenditure Policy (MTEF), sectoral policies, and the national statistical system. The government will work to overcome them, with support from its development partners, during implementation of the national strategy.

Analytical Summary

The economic situation in Congo continues to be characterized by a low degree of diversification of the productive bases, heavy dependence on oil, an unsustainable external debt, and basic infrastructures that are obsolete or were destroyed during recurrent armed conflicts. For these reasons, the government embarked on the PRSP process, thereby reflecting its desire to reconstruct the country and improve the living conditions of the people.

In a post-conflict situation, the government's efforts were focused first and foremost on the re-establishment of peace and security. This made it possible to restore democracy through the introduction of republican institutions, the rehabilitation of the macroeconomic environment, and the re-initiation of negotiations with international development partners, notably the Bretton Woods institutions.

The I-PRSP, prepared using a participatory process and adopted by the government in September 2004, received the joint endorsement of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in December of the same year. Its implementation made it possible to make significant progress in the political, economic, and social spheres and to reach the decision point of the HIPC Initiative in March 2006.

This final Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (final PRSP) differs from the interim paper in that it responds to the weaknesses identified in the first paper, namely the lack of reliable statistical data, the lack of sectoral strategies, the limited consultation with development partners, and the low degree of ownership of the process on the part of decision-makers, civil society, and grassroots communities. With these issues addressed, the resulting paper is qualitatively far richer, with enhanced internationalization and ownership by all the stakeholders involved in its preparation (government, local governments, private sector, civil society, associations, NGOs, and international development partners).

To come up with a comprehensive diagnosis of growth and poverty and to more deeply analyze and properly draw up appropriate development policies and strategies, quantitative and qualitative surveys were conducted. This refers in particular to the quantitative and qualitative data identified by the ECOM, the EDS, sectoral and thematic consultations, participatory consultations, and workshops on building the capacities of stakeholders in the government, civil society, and Parliament, as well as the twenty-six sectoral studies carried out.

Analysis of the information gathered made it possible to highlight the multidimensional nature of poverty and to identify the causes and profiles of the poverty phenomenon in Congo.

On the macroeconomic level, the studies showed that the 2000-2004 period was characterized by the end of armed conflict and a gradual resumption of real GDP growth, with a 4 percent rate attributable principally to favorable international conditions. Starting in 2005, the favorable terms of trade, especially the rise in the international price of oil, combined with the increase of oil production, as well as the dynamism of the non-oil sector (transportation, telecommunications, and other services), made it possible to consolidate economic growth, which reached 7.9 percent in 2005, 7 percent in 2006, and then declined in 2007 (-1.6 percent). This outcome is also attributable to the effects of an environment characterized by the bolstering of peace.

Similarly, the country showed encouraging performance in monetary areas, with a consolidation of the monetary survey, the balance of payments, and debt sustainability, with the weight of the debt declining somewhat, as well as current transactions, which sharply improved in 2005 to the level of roughly 14 percent of GDP, as compared to 2 percent in 2004.

However, the sectoral distribution of the production structure in the Republic of Congo is still quite uneven and heavily dominated by petroleum production, which in 2005 represented over 50 percent of GDP and accounted for 70 percent of tax revenue and 85 percent of exports. The agricultural sector contributed no more than 5 percent of GDP and industry about 2 percent in 2006. Forest exploitation has a weakness in the area of local processing of fuels, and the energy sector falls far short of covering local needs.

Regarding the social area and poverty evaluation, the various studies show that the firming up of growth in recent years did not promote jobs or improve the quality of the labor force, the productivity of which remains low. Owing to the economic and financial crisis of the 1980s and the armed conflicts of the 1990s, combined with the uneven distribution of the fruits of growth, the social indicators remain low.

The proportion of the Congolese population living below the income poverty level, namely CFAF 544.40 per adult per day (ECOM 2005), is estimated at 50.7 percent. Moreover, it bears noting that this average masks sizable spatial, demographic, and socioeconomic inequalities.

The scope of poverty is more pronounced in semi-urban areas (67.4 percent) than in rural areas (64.8 percent) or in the other communes (58.4 percent), while it is lower in urban areas, principally Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, where the corresponding figures are 42.3 percent and 33.5 percent, respectively.

The evaluation of poverty in the Republic of Congo shows that households headed by women are more exposed to poverty (58.2 percent) than those headed by men (48.8 percent). Similarly, households headed by individuals with no education are poorer (69 percent) than those where the head of household has completed primary school (61 percent), secondary school (50.2 percent), or higher education (30 percent). Moreover, household size has a considerable impact on the incidence of poverty, which affects 52.6 percent of single-parent extended households and 47.3 percent of extended families.

The socio-professional category of the head of the family appears to have an impact on the household. Indeed, households headed by an individual engaged in agriculture (69 percent) or industry (56.5 percent) are poorer than those headed by individuals engaged in services and trade (36.8 percent). Poverty is less pronounced in households whose head works in the administration or a public enterprise (24.5 percent) rather than in the private sector (39 percent).

In addition, participatory consultations made it possible to identify the following vulnerable groups: widow(er)s with dependent children, abused children, abandoned children, street children, orphans, unmarried young mothers, retired persons, the elderly, individuals without jobs and the unemployed, persons displaced and harmed by the conflicts, those injured by the wars, indigenous peoples, and other minority groups, for which a support program is needed immediately.

Finally, the ECOM indicates that poverty is characterized by a combination of deprivations:

On the individual level, the inability to feed, house, or decently clothe oneself; rejection by or exclusion from society; the absence of esteem for oneself, and the violation of individual and human rights.

As regards basic social services and infrastructures, there is limited access to the treatment and distribution network for safe drinking water; a lack of sanitation facilities for the evacuation and treatment of waste water; insufficient energy production and distribution; weaknesses in the transportation and communications systems; and an absence of road system services.

This long list is expanded by poor access to school and health facilities. The Congolese education and health systems are in the throes of a profound crisis, reflected in particular in the following:

- For the educational system, there are declining success rates, deterioration in the supply of education, and decline in teacher qualifications.
- For the health system, a sizable fringe group of the population has been excluded from quality basic health care, particularly in rural and semi-rural areas.

In view of this poverty situation, the definition of cohesive socio-economic policies and sectoral strategies constitutes a major challenge that the government must meet.

Briefly, the major challenges identified as needing to be addressed by the government are as follows:

- Eliminate the insecurity which persists in certain areas;
- Improve the quality of governance;
- Strengthen the institutional framework;
- Reduce income inequalities;
- Improve the purchasing power of the population;
- Broaden the productive base;
- Promote job opportunities and reduce unemployment, especially in urban areas;
- Improve the education system;
- Strengthen the health system;
- Boost the level of human and physical capital;
- Improve the population's access to safe drinking water;
- Halt environmental degradation;
- Improve environmental health (water supply, sanitation, elimination of biomedical waste, health education, environmental education); and
- Reduce the propagation of HIV/AIDS.

The government's vision of development, which is cognizant of the failure of past strategies, is to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the goals of the New Hope program, and to establish a link between the debt relief anticipated from the I-HIPC and growth and poverty reduction.

Achieving the MDGs implies that many challenges will have to be met: (i) the promotion of macroeconomic governance and an institutional framework conducive to the development of the private sector; (ii) investment in rebuilding infrastructure and human capital, with a view to improving the competitiveness of the economy, the social coverage of the poorest, the quality of the education system and health system, etc.; (iii) diversification of the productive

base so as to limit dependence on oil (and hence exposure to exogenous shocks) and expand the job opportunities of the population; and (iv) the promotion of strong, sustainable, and equitably distributed growth.

Poverty reduction requires not only high rates of growth that are better distributed, but also targeted budgets in favor of the poor and properly adapted structural and sectoral policies. For this reason the PRS is built upon the five following strategic axes: (i) improved governance and the consolidation of peace and security; (ii) the promotion of economic growth and the stability of the macroeconomic framework; (iii) improved access to basic social services by the population; (iv) improvement of the social environment; and (v) a strengthened fight against HIV/AIDS.

To guarantee the success of the national poverty reduction strategy and identify any necessary corrective measures, a rigorous monitoring and evaluation system based on a battery of indicators has been put in place. The government undertakes to guarantee proper monitoring and evaluation through the promotion of sound management practices, enhancing the capacities of the statistical system in order to improve statistical information, a more in-depth poverty diagnostics, the formulation of comprehensive and sectoral poverty reduction strategies, and facilitation of the planning and evaluation of progress toward achieving strategic goals.

In addition, quantified objectives and the timetable for achieving them have been determined and a corresponding mechanism put in place. These operations will be carried out by the sectoral ministries through their central and de-concentrated technical directorates, thanks to the development of a broad and strong partnership with civil society, the private sector, and grassroots communities.

PRS implementation should proceed in a suitable environment for ensuring its greatest possible success. However, the current environment may entail a number of constraints on and risks to proper PRS execution. These constraints and risks are both endogenous and exogenous.

Endogenous constraints and risks

On the political level, the persistence of pockets of insecurity, in particular in Pool, may constitute an obstacle to optimum success of the PRS.

On the institutional level, the following factors may undermine execution of the strategy: (i) the weakness of the institution responsible for PRS coordination; (ii) failure to apply administrative and structural reforms; and (iii) the weakness of the national statistical system as regards gathering, processing, analyzing, and disseminating data.

On the economic level, the major constraints identified are: (i) the inability to ensure sound macroeconomic equilibrium consistent with regional requirements and the requirements of the international financial institutions; and (ii) inadequate mobilization and absorption of financial resources, in particular HIPC resources.

On the social level, the process could be weakened by: (i) the disorganization of civil society; (ii) the inadequate mobilization of development partners; (iii) the low degree of ownership of the PRS by the various stakeholders; and (iv) uncivil actions and the lack of involvement of the people in the decision-making process.

Exogenous constraints and risks

A number of negative factors might contribute to preventing the success of PRS implementation: (i) drops in raw materials prices; (ii) deterioration of the terms of trade; (iii) fluctuation in the exchange rates of the major international currencies; and (iv) natural disasters (floods, erosion, etc.).

Introduction

The Republic of Congo embarked on a poverty reduction process following the recurrent armed conflicts of the 1990s that brought about deterioration in the living conditions of the people and destroyed the economic fabric. Following the end of the conflicts, the government's initial efforts focused on the re-establishment of peace and the recovery of the economy. Thus the National Poverty Reduction Committee (CNLP) was established in October 2001.

In September 2002, the decision of the Congolese government to prepare a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper was principally driven by the desire to have a cohesive, consensual, and unique frame of reference setting forth the major foci for economic and social development. This frame of reference, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), should make it possible to prepare, implement, and evaluate policies conducive to reducing poverty effectively by 2015, in keeping with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The objectives of this framework also include ensuring consistency among all the sectoral and thematic policy papers, so as to provide Congo with an instrument for negotiations with its development partners.

Initiated in September 2002, this effort enabled the government to sign a cooperation arrangement under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF). As Congo became eligible for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, an interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) was prepared and approved by the Executive Boards of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) in December 2004. The efforts made it possible in March 2006 to reach the decision point for the HIPC Initiative.

The principle adopted by the government for preparation of the final PRSP places particular emphasis on a participatory approach entailing the active involvement of all ministerial departments and bringing in civil society and other development stakeholders through direct consultations and workshop seminars, with multifaceted support from the development partners. This involvement of the various stakeholders will guarantee the success of the PRSP preparation process.

The participatory consultations organized made it possible for each and every stakeholder to become involved in the process of developing the comprehensive strategy. These consultations contributed to strengthen the relationships between the various stakeholders and to coordinate their actions, thereby creating the synergy necessary for PRSP preparation and for its monitoring during implementation.

The final PRSP is structured in five chapters. Chapter I presents the background and the PRSP preparation process. Chapter II provides a diagnosis of poverty in the Congo. Chapter III addresses the strategic axes for poverty reduction. Chapter IV is devoted to the macroeconomic framework and resource allocation. Finally, Chapter V describes the implementation mechanisms and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the poverty reduction strategy.

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Chapter I: Background and Process of Preparation of the PRSP

1.1. Background

Following a period of armed conflict, in 1999, the Congo embarked on a phase of reconstruction that led to the gradual restoration of government authority as institutional and economic reforms were implemented.

Efforts to entrench democracy, by putting in place democratic institutions, strengthening the economic climate, and promoting private initiative, paved the way for a resumption of relations with development partners, in particular the Bretton Woods Institutions.

After a series of structural adjustment programs (SAPs), new financial adjustment programs were launched with the support of the international community. These programs focus on financial discipline and the restructuring of economic sectors with the potential to drive growth. They are also aimed at channeling both the resources generated by the national economy and those provided by development partners to the social sectors so as to ensure that the poorest population groups benefit from a more equitable distribution of the fruits of adjustment and economic growth.

With this in mind, Congo started the process of preparing and implementing the PRSP. The Interim PRSP was adopted by the government in September 2004, following a participatory process, and received the support of both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in December of the same year. This document made it possible for Congo to reach the decision point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative in March 2006, given the progress achieved on the political, economic, and social fronts.

1.1.1. On the political front

The situation of the country remains marked by the sociopolitical conflicts of 1993, 1997, 1998, and 1999, which resulted in the destruction of socio-economic infrastructure, loss of human life and massive population displacements.

Efforts to restore peace made it possible to normalize the socio-political situation and begin a program of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants with the support of the European Union and the World Bank. Further consolidation of peace allowed people to return from exile, facilitated the resettlement of exiled workers, the functioning of political parties and civil society organizations (CSOs) and the gradual restoration of the free movement of goods and persons throughout the national territory.

The current institutional framework of the Republic of Congo, as defined by the Constitution of January 20, 2002, provides for a presidential regime and the principle of separation of powers among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Ushered in by the election of the President of the Republic in March 2002, the establishment of the various institutions provided for by the new Constitution (National Assembly, Senate, Constitutional Court, High Court of Justice, Audit and Fiscal Discipline Office, Economic and Social Council, Council on Freedom of Communication, National Human Rights Commission, Ombudsman of the Republic) was completed in March 2005.

The present political and administrative organization subdivides the national territory into twelve (12) departments under the responsibility of Prefects. The local governments, that is, the departments and the communes, are administered by elected councils.

1.1.2. On the economic front

Guided by the President of the Republic's *Nouvelle Espérance* (New Hope) program, the government embarked on a path of reconstruction and structural reform which culminated in a resumption of relations with the international financial community and, in particular, the Bretton Woods Institutions. Indeed, a three-year program covering the 2003-2007 period was concluded with these institutions under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF), thus enabling Congo to regain its international credibility. In addition to securing the financial support of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and other development partners, the agreement provided an opportunity for Congo to engage in structural reforms aimed at stabilizing its macroeconomic framework, boosting growth and reducing poverty.

Congo, therefore, prepared, and is currently implementing, the I-PRSP which was approved in December 2004 by the Boards of the World Bank and the IMF. Since 2005, the fundamentals of the Congolese economy have improved markedly. In fact, ongoing structural reforms and consistently high oil prices have resulted in stronger economic growth and improvements in the monetary situation as well as in public finances and the external account position, while the consumer price index remained relatively stable. In the context of the implementation of the I-PRSP, the government has also given priority to pro-poor spending in the investment budget, by labeling such expenditures "PP", to ensure their speedy processing all along the expenditure chain.

With regard to external debt, Congo has made considerable efforts in the processing of such debt and in seeking solutions with both domestic and foreign creditors. An audit of domestic debt was conducted and an agreement on repayment modalities was reached with the various parties, in conjunction with the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWI). Negotiations have also been conducted with the Paris Club on external debt relief consistent with the HIPC Initiative. An agreement, within the same framework, has also been reached with the London Club creditors. The country is currently seeking to obtain comparable treatment from suppliers, non-London Club commercial creditors, and other creditors, while similar approaches are also continuing vis-à-vis the two remaining Paris Club creditors.

1.1.3. On the social front

In the wake of the conflicts of 1997, 1998, and 1999, agreements were signed with the rebel movements enabling railroad traffic and business activities to resume, thus returning the country to more peaceful conditions. Further, through an agreement reached with the various trade unions on a social moratorium, the government was able to avert strike action. In addition, since 2006, there has been a gradual lifting of salary reduction measures in force for many years, although these adjustments civil servants' remuneration remain timid in the light of cost of living.

1.2. PRSP Preparation Process

The Poverty Reduction Strategy seeks to harness the strong contribution of all social actors to the poverty reduction program. It was prepared using an appropriate institutional framework and a sustained participatory process ranging across the whole spectrum of Congolese society.

1.2.1. Institutional framework

To steer the process of preparation of the PRSP, the government established a National Poverty Reduction Committee, by Decree 2001-532 of October 31, 2001, modified by Decree 2003-60 of May 6, 2003 establishing the CNLP. The Chair of the Committee is held by the

Minister of State, Minister of Planning and Land Affairs, while the Minister of the Economy, Finance and Budget holds the Vice-Chair.

The CNLP establishes policy guidelines for the formulation of the PRSP and is responsible for oversight of the process. It is assisted in its work by a Permanent Technical Secretariat.

The Permanent Technical Secretariat is entrusted with coordinating all activities related to preparation process. It is also responsible for the technical and practical coordination of the implementation process and for the monitoring and assessment of the PRSP priority actions. It has a Technical Unit (CT) comprised of five (5) members.

At the central level, the Permanent Technical Secretariat is supported by thematic and sectoral groups (TSGs), comprised of representatives of the line ministries involved in the PRSP process, of which the research and planning directorates (DEP) form the focal points, as well as by civil society (NGOs/associations, trade unions, denominational groupings), and private sector representations.

At the departmental and local levels, the CNLP is supported by Departmental Poverty Reduction Committees (CDLPs) and Local Poverty Reduction Committees (CLLPs).

1.2.2. PRSP Preparation Stages

An assessment of the shortcomings of the I-PRSP, approved in December 2004 by the Bretton Woods Institutions, formed the basis for preparation of the Full PRSP. The main limitations identified were the lack of reliable statistical data and sectoral strategies, insufficient consultation with development partners, the lack of ownership of the process by decision-makers, and limited participation of civil society and grassroots communities.

To address these deficiencies, in 2005, under the aegis of the National Poverty Reduction Committee, the government organized the Congolese household survey (ECOM) as well as the demographic and health survey (DHS).

A capacity-building seminar/workshop for Non-State Actors (NSAs) and the Parliament was held in September 2005 in Brazzaville with a view to effectively involving these stakeholders in the process of preparation and implementation of the Full PRSP.

To address the deficiencies noted in the I-PRSP regarding sectoral policies and strategies, twenty-six (26) sectoral studies were conducted by national consultants recruited using a tendering procedure.

Validation workshops on the twenty-six (26) sectoral studies and on the examination and adoption of the draft of the Full PRSP by the thematic groups were held in January 2007[sic] in Brazzaville.

On the basis of these studies, thematic discussions on the sectoral strategies were organized in February and March 2006. Strategic guidance notes were drafted for each sector and were submitted to the various thematic groups for consideration and adoption.

The national workshop on the "Diagnosis of National Evaluation Capacities" held on July 7, 2006, with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Francophonie Organization (OIF), provided information on evaluation capacity building in the context of comprehensive and sectoral development programs. It highlighted the institutional and judicial framework for evaluation, the scope of evaluation practice and the institutional capacity building needs.

A multisectoral team was put in place to prepare the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) of the Poverty Reduction Strategy in line with the macroeconomic framework, following office memorandum issued by the Minister of State, Minister of Planning, Land Affairs, Economic Integration and NEPAD.

Several brainstorming meetings, aimed at devising a Congolese national plan for achieving the MDGs, were organized, in particular:

- The workshop launching the thinking and awareness campaign on the MDGs, held on May 11, 2006 in Brazzaville;
- The October 2006 capacity building workshop for Congolese officials in MDG-based planning, with the participation of the millennium project team;
- The workshop on the drafting of the sectoral plans, presentation and pre-validation of the draft National MDG Plan in Abô (department of Cuvette);
- The extended workshop on the presentation and validation of the National MDG Plan held in December 2006 in Brazzaville.

In addition, the government organized participatory consultations on poverty in the country's twelve (12) departments to collect qualitative information on poverty from the grassroots populations. The aim of these consultations was essentially to improve the efficiency of government poverty alleviation efforts, complement quantitative analysis, and contribute to the formulation of poverty reduction strategies.

The participatory consultations involved nine (9) stages in two main phases.

Phase one: Preparatory activities

- Selection, through a tendering process, of fourteen (14) civil society platforms;
- Selection of 44 consultation centers on the basis of specific criteria of which the most important were: geographical location, linguistic and cultural grouping, armed conflict, population density, remoteness, existence of ethnic minorities, prevalence of particular diseases, natural disasters and specific economic activities;
- Training of trainers in participatory consultations, 150 departmental supervisors (administration and civil society) and senior public service officials;
- Recruitment and training of district and commune level consultation facilitators;
- Outreach to departmental and municipal authorities and social mobilization of interest groups and grassroots populations.

Phase two: Conduct of the consultations

- Holding of consultations in villages and districts;
- Holding of workshops in the districts/communes for enrichment and validation of the district and village reports by grassroots community delegates;
- Holding of workshops to present the reports from the districts/communes in the departments for validation by delegates from districts/communes consulted or not consulted as well as by representatives of the central government, civil society platforms and local governments;
- Holding of a national workshop to validate the twelve (12) departmental reports emanating from the participatory consultations, prepared by the Prefects, the Presidents of departmental and communal councils, the moderators of departmental workshops, the Mayors of communes, the Administrators-Mayors of arrondissements in Brazzaville, the supervisory members of departmental consultations, the heads of civil society platforms, representatives of the population, public and private administrations, civil society, and development partners.

1.2.2.1 Methodology of the consultations

The participatory consultations on poverty were conducted using the Accelerated Participatory Research Method (APRM). The thirteen (13) tools and technical used were: (i) direct observation, (ii) social map, (iii) transect, (iv) structured interview, (v) Venn arrangement and diagram, (vi) time use profile, (vii) gender analysis matrix, (viii) documentation review, (ix) seasonal calendar, (x) life history (xi) historical profile; (xii) planning matrix.

1.2.2.2 Content of consultations

The information sought focused on: (i) the concept of poverty, (ii) the perception of poverty, (iii) the characteristics of poverty, (iv) issues of development, vulnerability and exclusion, (v) the causes and consequences of poverty, (vi) peace and governance, (vii) gender, (viii) HIV/AIDS, (ix) the evolution of poverty, (x) local poverty alleviation initiatives or survival strategies put in place by populations, (xi) poverty reduction strategies and actions, (xii) PRSP implementation, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and (xiii) internal and external constraints and obstacles.

Chapter II: Diagnosis of Poverty in Congo

The poverty diagnosis was done using quantitative and qualitative data from the ECOM, the DHS, participatory consultations on poverty among grassroots populations, and various sectoral and thematic studies. This chapter presents the monetary poverty profile, the perception of poverty by grassroots populations and the diagnosis by sector.

2.1. Monetary poverty

Monetary poverty means a lack of income that strongly constrains consumption capacity.

Estimates of the incidence of monetary poverty show that over half of the Congolese people are poor (50.7 percent). A comparison of monetary poverty levels among children, adult women and men indicates that children constitute the most “deprived” segment of the population, followed by adult women. As adult women make up 28.6 percent of this group, that is more than men, their level of monetary poverty could help explain the position of children, given their role in households.

2.1.1. Poverty line

The poverty line was determined using the cost-of-basic needs (CBN) method, which consists in estimating the percentage of the population, or of households, capable of buying a basket of food and non-food items considered essential to meet subsistence needs.

For the purpose of establishing the poverty line, in the absence of a study to determine specific nutritional needs for Congo, the level of consumption expenditure needed to meet the food needs of households was calculated on the basis of 2400 kcal per day per adult equivalent, taking account of the poverty line generally used by the World Bank for low-income poor countries (1US\$ at 1985 rates/person/day). The corresponding level of expenditure was, thus, estimated at CFAF 339.26 per day.

In turn, the level of consumption expenditure needed to meet the essential non-food needs of households was estimated at CFAF 205.14 per day.

In total, in 2005, the overall poverty line was assessed at CFAF 544.40 per day, meaning that in Congo a minimum of CFAF 544.40 is necessary to meet the daily basic needs, both food and non-food, of an adult.

2.1.2. Spatial disparities in poverty

A diagnosis of the socio-economic situation was carried out on the basis of the 2005 Congolese household survey (ECOM) data that was used to draw up a poverty profile, a brief summary of which is provided below. According to the findings of the survey, 50.7 percent of the Congolese population lives below the poverty line.

Table 1: Poverty indices by geographical location, Congo 2005

	Rate of poverty (percent)	Share of the population (percent)
Brazzaville	42.3	24.2
Pointe-Noire	33.5	15.5
Other communes	58.4	6.8
Semi-urban	67.4	9.4
Rural areas	64.8	44.2
Total	50.7	100.0

Source: World Bank (2007) based on the findings of ECOM 2005

The distribution of poverty by area of residence shows that the cities of Pointe Noire and Brazzaville have the lowest proportions of poor people in the country, with 33.5 percent and 42.3 percent, respectively. Further, semi-urban and rural areas show high concentrations of poor people (67.4 percent and 64.8 percent). Given the strategic role of heads of households in generating income and in decision making, it is much more interesting to define the poverty profile on the basis of characteristics that affect the potential to be poor such as gender, level of education, and job market prospects.

Breakdown of poverty by gender: poverty is greater in households headed by women (58.2 percent versus 48.8 percent of those headed by men). This may be attributable to the fact that, generally speaking, women have weaker human capital and are often victims of discrimination in the labor and credit markets. The gap between households headed by women and those headed by men is widest in urban areas.

Breakdown of poverty by age of the head of household: The survey found that poverty increases with the age of the head of household as a result of family responsibilities. There is, however, a positive correlation between age and professional experience and this may positively influence household income. Older heads of households have higher levels of income, with the property accumulated over their lives putting them in a relatively more comfortable position to meet their needs than younger heads of families. Nonetheless, as family responsibilities (household size and children's growing needs) increase with age, poverty tends to accentuate in cases where the accumulation process is weak. Average household size is 3.3 people for households whose head is under 30 years old and of 6.2 people for those aged 50-59 years. Another contributory factor to the poverty profile broken down by age is the level of education of the head of household. Only 7.6 percent of heads of households under 30 years old are unschooled, compared to 51.8 percent for heads of households aged 60 and over.

Breakdown of poverty by level of education of the head of household: the incidence of poverty is 59 percent for households of which the head never went to school, 58 percent for those with primary level schooling, 42 percent for those with secondary level schooling, and only 17 percent in those households in which the head reached higher education. Households headed by a person with no schooling account for 17 percent of the population and 23 percent of the poor, while those whose head received higher education account for 23 percent of the population and just 6 percent of the poor. In an environment with high unemployment rates, education makes it easier both to find a job and to secure well-paid employment.

Breakdown of poverty by job situation of the head of household: since engaging in economic activity constitutes the main source of income for individuals, particular attention should be paid to the contours of poverty in relation to individual job market situations. Poverty mirrors the social hierarchy, with the incidence of poverty being lowest among households headed by professionals or employers and the highest among self-employed workers. Among households of professionals or employers, one person in five lives in poverty, while the figure is over three in five among households of self-employed workers. Households that derive

their income from agricultural activities are the most vulnerable. Among households headed by farmers, nearly seven people in ten are poor. Conversely, slightly less than two in five people live below the poverty line in tertiary sector households.

2.1.3. Characteristics of income distribution

The simplest way of mapping inequality consists in classifying households by their level of consumption, from the poorest to the richest, and breaking them down into four groups of 25 percent each (1st quartile, 2nd quartile, 3rd quartile, and 4th quartile).

In 2005, in all areas of residence, average household consumption expenditure increased considerably, from the poorest quartile (CFAF 142.971, CFAF 162,067, CFAF 147.976, CFAF 121.628 and, CFAF 150.977 for Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire, other localities, the semi-urban areas and rural areas, respectively) to the richest quartile (CFAF 1,016.614, CFAF 990,013, CFAF 901.999, CFAF 1,009.633, and CFAF 828,384 for Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire, other localities, semi-urban areas and rural areas, respectively).

The Table below shows the quartile dispersion ratios. It shows that the ratio of consumption expenditure between the poorest and richest varies from 5 to 7 in all areas of residence. Thus, in Brazzaville, the richest quartile consumes 7 times more than the poorest quartile.

Table 2: Quartile dispersion ratios (25 percent), Congo 2005

Localities	Quartile (25 percent)
Brazzaville	7.11
Pointe-Noire	6.11
Other localities	6.10
Semi-urban areas	8.30
Rural areas	5.49

Source: ECOM 2005

Overall, the survey demonstrated that two types of income are particularly important in the country, namely wages, which constitute the main source of household income, and income generated from non-agricultural enterprises. Together, these two sources account for almost three-quarters of the income of Congolese households. Wages make up 39.2 percent of total income. The share of wages is even higher in urban areas, rising to 45.9 percent. Revenue from non-agricultural enterprises is the main source of household income for the first quintile, that is, the poorest tranche of households.

Further, per capita household income rises with the quintiles by standard of living, and average annual household income amounts to CFAF 1,753 million, while consumption totals CFAF 1,516 million, that is, a ratio of 1.16.

Table 3: Household income and consumption by consumption quintile (in thousands of CFAF), Congo 2005

	Urban		Rural		National	
	Income	Consumption	Income	Consumption	Income	Consumption
Poorest	1,022.6	657.4	617.0	452.3	774.2	531.7
Average poor	1,269.8	933.5	823.8	686.3	1,027.7	799.3
Median	1,775.4	1,300.8	1,012.4	1,005.5	1,442.2	1,171.9
Average rich	2,114.8	1,739.8	1,088.3	1,330.1	1,795.3	1,612.3
Richest	4,282.0	3,800.1	1,763.5	2,246.6	3,708.2	3,446.2
Total	2,352.9	1,937.7	944.1	948.0	1,753.0	1,516.3

Source: World Bank (2007) based on the findings of ECOM 2005

The areas in which inequalities are most acute also include household income generated from the two most important sources of revenue. In respect of wages, 40 percent of the poorest households account for 11 percent of wage income, while on its own, the richest quintile absorbs half of this source of income. In fact, being a wage earner is a privilege that few poor people have access to. Moreover, even without calculating inequality/wage elasticity, it is clear that any increase in wages disproportionately benefits the non-poor and, therefore, increases inequality. This statement holds true even allowing for a partial redistribution of wages among households in the form of private transfers.

There is also a high degree of inequality in income derived from non-agricultural enterprises. One could argue that in order to earn significant levels of income from this type of activity a certain amount of capital is needed which, because of the imperfections in the credit market, is more accessible to non-poor households through self-financing, hence the resulting inequality. At the other end of the spectrum, farm incomes (including own consumption) are the least unequal. Twenty percent of the poorest account for 19.9 percent of agricultural income, compared to 23.4 percent for 20 percent of the richest.

2.2. Non-monetary poverty

The non-monetary approach looks at poverty from the perspective of the poverty perception of the head of household or their spouse. It reflects difficulties related to living conditions, adaptation strategies, and priority actions for combating poverty.

2.2.1. Multidimensional poverty analysis

The multidimensional analysis of poverty presented below is centered around eight (8) dimensions or areas used as a basis for analyzing the kinds of deprivations that people face. The focal areas are: (i) monetary; (ii) education; (iii) nutrition; (iv) health; (v) work; (vi) water and sanitation; (vii) housing and (viii) remoteness/integration. They were selected essentially in line with the MDGs, the President of the Republic's societal program, *Nouvelle Espérance*, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This choice was also informed by two other essential considerations, namely, the availability of information contained in the database and the relevance of all of these areas in analyzing household living conditions.

In each area, the variables defined take account of the realities of Congolese society or, at least, of the standards used in the ECOM data collection process for which the definitions of the main well-being indicators proposed served as a basis.

The list of areas of deprivation used in the analysis are as follows:

Table 4: List of areas of deprivation and variables, Congo 2005

Areas	Level measured	Variables	Poverty line
Monetary	Household	Household expenditure	Expenditure by adult equivalent below the absolute poverty line
Education	Individual	Children aged 6-17 years (groups of 6-11 and 12-17 year olds): School attendance & progress Adults: highest class attended	Children: child is not enrolled in school or is more than 2 classes behind Adults: did not complete primary level schooling.
Nutrition	Household	Does the household have problems meeting its food needs?	Deprived when the answer is 'often' or 'always'
Health	Household	Use of health services in case of illness	Deprived when an individual in the household was ill and did not consult a health service
Work	Individual	Children aged 10-14 years: child labor (holds a job) Adults 18-55 years old: unemployment (ILO definition) or underemployment (where someone has a job but is seeking to increase their income)	Children: in cases where children work for pay outside the household Adult: where an adult is unemployed or underemployed
Water and sanitation	Household	Distance from drinking water source (around 5 minutes), source of safe drinking water, type of toilet, mode of waste water evacuation	Relative poverty line (ACM, classification and comparison of various types of households against a reference household)
Housing	Household	Wall material, electricity, main type of cooking fuel, number of people per bedroom	Relative poverty line (ACM, classification and comparison of various types of households against a reference household)
Integration/ Remoteness	Household	Access to public transport (around 30 minutes distance), ownership of a radio, ownership of a TV, ownership of a telephone, ownership of a means of transport (bicycle, car, pirogue, motorcycle)	Relative threshold (ACM, classification and comparison of various types of households against a reference household)

Source: World Bank (2007) based on the findings of ECOM 2005

As can be seen, the majority of variables retained are used for household level analyses. Only two dimensions (education and health) were analyzed at the individual level. In these two dimensions, the analysis highlighted big disparities between children, adult women, and adult men.

Although six other variables were used to conduct the household level poverty analysis, it should be noted that this has no bearing on the relevance of the analysis because in the areas of education and health, the use of services can be likened to the consumption of collective goods that generate economies of scale relative to the size of the household. A typical example of this would be the ownership of a television set or a radio, which, because they can be used collectively, make it possible to assess the situation of individuals in the light of the equipment in the household.

Table 5: Poverty incidence in various areas, Congo 2005

	Prevalence (percentage lines)			
	Population	Children	Adult women	Adult men
Monetary	50.7	53.71	47.8	46.2
Education	37.9	52.52	36.7	21.9
Nutrition	42.9	43.7	43.6	40.8
Health	60.23	60.9	58.5	60.5
Work	21.0	5.6 4	28.3	24.5
Water and sanitation	67.5	69.9	66.1	64.9
Housing	58.7	61.6	57.4	54.8
Remoteness	32.1	33.8	34.6	26.4
Population share (percent)	100	46.2	28.6	25.2

Source: Multidimensional poverty study based on the findings of ECOM 2005, UNICEF 2007.

The following conclusions by area can be drawn from the analysis:

Poverty in the area of education: Despite efforts made in recent years in the area of education, in particular a 23 percent increase in the number of schools (primary and secondary) between 2003 and 2004 (Congo Social Review 2002-2004), education remains an area in which many Congolese people suffer deprivation. Analysis of the incidence of education deprivation shows that 37 percent of Congolese are affected, of which 52 percent of children, 36 percent of adult women, and 21 percent of adult men. It should be noted that, in the light of the figures, children and women constitute the two population segments that are most education deprived. It is important to point out that over half the children are behind by at least two classes, and/or education deprived, although education is recognized as a fundamental right of children.

The disparities between men and women could be explained by the persistence in Congolese society of socio-cultural pressures that are unfavorable to women, both in education and employment.

Poverty in the area of nutrition: in the area of nutrition, poverty affects the Congolese population to the same degree across the board, regardless of individual category. In addition, a significant proportion of the population, 42 percent, is affected. Children, adult women, and men are indiscriminately subject to this type of deprivation as the percentages of people concerned are very similar in all categories of individuals.

Poverty in the area of health: estimates of the incidence of poverty in this area show that 60 percent of the population is deprived of health care, irrespective of the group considered. In practical terms, this level of deprivation translates into high levels of mortality. Between 1991 and 2005, infant-child mortality was assessed at 117 per 1000 births, with adult mortality evaluated at 6 per 1000 women and 7 per 1000 men (DHS 2005). This situation is largely due to inadequate, or in some instances nonexistent, financing for the rehabilitation and construction of Comprehensive Health Centers (CSI), a lack of personnel, and the paucity of medical equipment and supplies (Congo Social Review 2005).

Poverty in the area of housing: the majority of the Congolese population, that is 58 percent, is concerned by this problem. In fact, of the eight dimensions, the area of housing shows the highest poverty rates. This situation is attributable both to individual monetary poverty and to the enormous institutional and regulatory deficiencies of the government's housing policy, which result in a high frequency of haphazard building, often using non-sustainable materials and on undeveloped sites devoid of basic infrastructure such as connection to water and electricity supply networks.

Poverty in the areas of water and sanitation: although the water and sanitation sub-sectors are priority areas, poverty in these areas affects 68 percent of the population. In fact, the national water distribution company (SNDE) only supplies safe drinking water to around 45 percent of the urban population and 12 percent of the rural population of Congo (Congo Social Review 2005).

The sanitation situation is very precarious. The absence of street-cleaning and refuse services as well as the advanced age of evacuation networks are some of the major problems that large cities and secondary towns commonly have to grapple with. In broad terms, individual level poverty in this area can be explained by inefficient public policy.

Poverty in the area of work: the overall level of deprivation, estimated at 21 percent, is a reflection of the deep crisis in the job market. In this area, women (28 percent) are, however, more disadvantaged than men (25 percent) owing to the discrimination they suffer. As was shown by the analysis in the education dimension, women benefit less from educational opportunities than men as they face a variety of societal pressures—two determining factors in access to employment.

Among children, the rate of work deprivation is relatively low (6 percent). However, even this low rate is evidence of a social problem, as work compromises the future of a percentage of young people who are forced to engage in economic activities rather than acquire the educational tools necessary for their future empowerment.

Poverty in the area of integration/remoteness: in respect of social inclusion, the findings of the study also point to deprivation affecting a sizeable section of the population (32 percent on average). As integration is conditioned both a year individual's available resources and by means of communication, the poverty situation in this dimension is a reflection of both individuals' monetary poverty and infrastructure weaknesses, particularly in transport.

Two salient conclusions can be drawn from this analysis of the incidence of poverty in eight dimensions. First, the majority of Congolese are affected by poverty in the areas of water and sanitation, health, housing, and monetary resources. Second, poverty rates are fairly high in all the dimensions. This underscores the fact that the issue of poverty should be at the heart of the concerns of the public authorities in Congo.

2.2.2. Perception of poverty by Congolese households

According to ECOM over three-quarters of the households surveyed (77.1 percent), in rural (68 percent) as well as urban areas (84.1 percent), do not consider Congo a poor country, although 62.2 percent consider themselves poor. This perception is also shared by the richest segment of the population.

In view of their standard of living, the Congolese people consider themselves poorer than the abovementioned 50.7 percent. monetary poverty line Around 85.6 percent of households see lack of employment as the main cause of poverty. This finding remains virtually constant for households in rural (81.4 percent) and urban (88.8 percent) areas, as well for households in the poorest (86.8 percent) and richest (83.5 percent) population groups. Almost half of all households (49.3 percent) are also of the opinion that poverty is synonymous with "poor management of public goods". Fifty-eight percent of the population in the richest population group raised this, compared to 42 percent for the poorest segment.

Participatory consultations among grassroots communities highlighted the multidimensional nature of poverty. At the individual level, poverty can be measured using several parameters such as living conditions, lifestyle, and socialization. Indeed, individuals may be classified as

poor not only on the basis of material precariousness but also lack of social relations. Thus, a person is considered poor if he or she:

- has difficulty finding food
- has difficulty finding shelter or lacks decent housing
- has difficulty accessing health care, education, safe drinking water
- has no money
- has no children
- has no friends
- has no work
- has no cultivable land
- has no work machinery or tools, etc.

This reference to material goods as well as to interpersonal relationships demonstrates that poverty has several dimensions. It may be monetary or food related or be reflected in such things as difficulty accessing basic social services. It may also be social or cultural and is perceived by populations in all of its various manifestations.

Poverty is perceived differently depending on gender, age group, activity, and place of residence.

Gender: Men perceive poverty as a lack employment, money, a house or the inability to have a wife and children. Women, on the other hand, perceive poverty as the inability or difficulty meeting basic needs: food, clothing, household articles, and production tools. They also take into consideration the spouse's level of income of. Cultural and spiritual considerations as well as the fact of not having a spouse or children are also seen as a indication of poverty.

Age group: For young people, poverty is attributable to illiteracy, lack of money, employment and enterprising spirit. For seniors, poverty is associated with aloneness, a feeling of insecurity, exclusion and marginalization.

Place of residence: In urban areas, poverty is linked among other things to unsanitary conditions, environment-related diseases, low wages, haphazard urbanization, lack of development of housing areas, and the high cost of living. In rural areas, poverty is linked to the lack of cultivable land and production tools, the poor condition of roads, and difficulty accessing water, electricity, education, and quality health care.

Difficulties linked to the living conditions of households

More than two-thirds (63.8 percent) of households think their income is not sufficient to cover their monthly expenses. This phenomenon is more pronounced in urban areas (70.5 percent) than in rural areas (55.1 percent). Further, the number of households (28.4 percent) in which children are barred from school for non-payment of school fees decreases as the standard of living of households rises.

2.2.3 Determinants of poverty

An analysis of the determinants of poverty was conducted using the econometric approach and a multiple logarithmic regression model. The endogenous variable is the logarithm of per capita income. The variables selected were age, household size, gender, education, employment, accessibility to basic infrastructure and social services. Analysis of the findings regarding the most significant variables is presented below.

Household size and gender of the head of household

Households with the largest number of children had the lowest levels of consumption and a higher probability of being poor. One additional child reduces consumption by around 10 percent. The presence of an additional teenager reduces consumption even more (- 20 percent in urban, and -27 percent in rural households). One additional adult male leads to a more significant decline in consumption than one female adult. Nevertheless, household composition has no impact on the probability of considering oneself poor. In rural areas, households headed by women live in the most difficult conditions. The fact that the head of household is female reduces the level of consumption by around 14 percent. Similarly, in rural areas, female heads of household have a greater propensity to feel poor.

Education

A household in which the head has primary level schooling consumes 15 percent more than a household in which the head never attended school. The impact of secondary and higher education on the level of consumption is even greater (20 percent for secondary and 30-to-40 percent for higher education). Regarding subjective poverty, it was noted that the more educated a person is, the less he or she feels poor.

Employment

With the exception of urban areas where households headed by professionals/entrepreneurs have the highest living standards, standard of living is not determined by type of employment. However, living standards are clearly influenced by sector of activity. In town, agriculture is the sector in which the risk of being poor is highest. In rural areas, on the other hand, the most disadvantaged people can be found in the industrial sector. This finding is quite surprising. A possible explanation is that the sector comprises essentially small, unproductive enterprises. A more in-depth analysis would, however, need to be conducted to gain under a clearer understanding of the characteristics of rural industry.

Accessibility to basic facilities and social services

The location of facilities is an important factor in the determination of household living standards. The time needed to access a basic service includes both distance and means of travel. In urban areas, access time to a source of safe drinking water or a secondary school facility, though important, is not linked to the notion of well-being. In rural areas, the long access times needed to get to a means of transport or secondary school facility worsen living conditions. Conversely, the proximity of facilities to places of residence makes it possible not only to reduce the cost of access to such facilities but also creates more free time that could be devoted to an income-generating activity.

2.2.4 Adaptation strategies of households

To improve their living conditions, households usually adopt three types of strategies, namely: increase their remunerative activities (67.3 percent), seek better paying work (58.9 percent), and change their eating habits (12.3 percent). These findings are very similar whether households live in rural or urban areas.

2.3. Diagnosis based on the participatory consultations

2.3.1. Definition of poverty by population group

It appears from all the departmental consultation reports that the concept of poverty as defined by the grassroots populations has been unanimously endorsed. In essence, poverty is multidimensional in nature. It includes not only monetary aspects, but also encompasses nutrition and clothing as well as access to basic facilities and social services (health, education, information, housing, safe drinking water and electricity, etc.) as the proximity and existence of such services has the power to improve lives. Thus, the quasi-absence or inadequacy of facilities and the poor quality of public services exacerbate poverty.

The concept of poverty also has an intellectual, spiritual, and psychological dimension. Individual behavior is also taken into account in the factors that contribute to poverty. It is generally accepted that individuals play a role in shaping their own lives and contributing to their well-being. Through their creativity, personal efforts, and awareness of their situation they contribute not only to their personal development but to that of society as a whole.

Thus, the inability of individuals, communities, administrative entities and/or departments, to address the vital problems or state of indigence in which they find themselves at a given point in time, are all signs of poverty in the Republic of Congo.

In summary, the concept of poverty may be defined as follows:

- Poverty is the quasi-impossibility for an individual or community to satisfy their basic needs (food, drink, health care, education, education of their children, housing, etc.);
- Poverty is characterized by inadequate levels of financial and material resources to provide for the well-being of an individual or community;
- Poverty is the state of indigence and precariousness in which an individual, a household or a community live;
- Poverty is the impossibility for an individual, a household, or a community to access material goods and basic social services (education, health, information, transport, safe drinking water, electricity, recreational activities);
- Poverty is a lack of the minimum wherewithal to live a decent, normal life;
- Poverty means a lack of financial, material, spiritual, intellectual, mental and cultural resources as well as visible impoverishment.

2.3.2. Characteristics of poverty

The characteristics of poverty are defined at the individual, household, community, and departmental level.

At the individual level: Poverty is characterized by a lack of clothing and the wearing of poor quality clothing, limited access to health care and education, precarious and unsanitary housing, poor quality food, and the lack of financial resources.

At the household level: Poverty is characterized by precarious housing, bad food, difficulty accessing health care and education, and low income.

At the community level: In districts and villages, poverty is characterized by difficulties in accessing safe drinking water, health care, and education, and by the lack of markets. In districts and arrondissements, poverty is characterized by difficult access to safe drinking water and electricity, an insufficient number of schools, businesses and small jobs.

At the departmental level: In rural areas, poverty is characterized by the absence or the inadequate number of schools and of health centers, difficult access to water, impracticable and badly maintained roads, ferries and bridges in dilapidated condition and remoteness. In Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, poverty is related to the lack or insufficient number of schools and health centers, the impracticability and lack of maintenance of roadways, difficult access to electricity, the presence of ravines and of potholes in the main roads and secondary roadways.

2.4. Sectoral and thematic diagnosis

Analysis of the twelve (12) departmental reports emanating from the participatory consultations on poverty (CPP), the twenty-six (26) thematic and sectoral studies, and the conclusions of the ECOM survey served as the basis for poverty diagnosis.

2.4.1. Governance

2.4.1.1. Political Governance

Since 1960, when the country gained its independence, political life in Congo has been marked by institutional instability. Twelve (12) Constitutions, including five (5) provisional ones have been adopted, that is, one Constitution every four (4) years on average. Analysis of their content, in particular those prepared under the one party regime, show that they enshrined an autocratic style of power under the management of a monolithic regime.

Political change has often been accompanied by recourse to violence as evidenced by the frequency of “coups de force” throughout Congo’s political history. Failure to respect the effective separation of powers and shortcomings in the organization of elections are underlying causes of the weakness of constitutional institutions and those responsible for the management and control of resources, as the executive has a very marked tendency to control the legislature and judiciary. Further, generally speaking, media quality is not very satisfactory.

The practice of democracy is recent in Congo, which easily explains the fragility of democratic culture, as noted and variously expressed through intolerance and the recourse to violence in case of election defeat.

The incapacity of elected representatives to exercise any real control over the management of public affairs, the dysfunctional judicial system, the failure to impose sanctions against public or private officials involved in various kinds of abuses (financial and criminal scandals, illicit enrichment, fiddling in public affairs)... are all examples of the weaknesses underpinning poor governance.

The weak involvement of grassroots populations in the decision-making process and the exclusion of certain social categories are also features of the process of participation in the political life of the country. Power sharing at the executive, legislative, judicial, and political levels has not met the quotas of one-third and one-fifth set for the participation of women in all decision-making bodies and elective positions, proposed by the African Union and the United Nations (A), respectively.

Despite their numerical importance (over 6,000 registered associations in 2004), civil society organizations suffer from organizational deficiencies, lack of support, and marginalization by the public authorities, all of which hampers their ability to play their role of interface between citizens and the public authorities effectively.

Political governance is characterized by: (i) the weakness of constitutional institutions and those involved in the management and control of resources; (ii) a fledgling culture of democracy; (iii) abuse of power and impunity; (iv) weak representation of women in decision-making spheres; (v) low involvement of grassroots communities in the decision-making process; (vi) inadequate organization of civil society and the media; (vii) poor interpretation of legal texts and their weak application.

2.4.1.1.1. Decentralization

Since the 1960s, various laws governing territorial administrative organization and decentralization have been passed. This process has been further strengthened by Law 3-2003 of January 17, 2003 on territorial administrative organization and Law 7-2003 of February 6, 2003 governing the organization and functioning of local governments.

This legislative framework is aimed at ensuring harmonious administration across the whole country, bringing administration closer to the people, creating the necessary conditions for the emergence of a pro-development administration, promoting local democracy, and achieving national unity. In practice, however, there is some blurring of roles and encroachment on competencies in deconcentrated and decentralized systems.

The results of previous implementation efforts in the country have been rather mixed for various reasons: (i) low institutional and human capacities at the local level (ii) inefficiency of mechanisms for the participation of citizens in the management of local affairs; and (iii) the inadequacy and irregular transfer of financial resources.

2.4.1.1.2. Departmental and local development

The process of departmental and local development involves the equipping and structuring of rural and urban spaces with a view to modernizing them and enhancing the quality of the lives of residents. It can also be defined as a process aimed at stimulating growth in departmental economies as well as social processing and improved well-being. It requires the participation of grassroots communities, Non-State Actors, and the public authorities, acting either independently, or within an agreed departmental planning framework.

The impetus comes from the government through decentralization mechanisms defining the respective spaces, a policy framework for decision-making and limits on its scope of action, as well as the ways in which the process can be supported.

In this country, trends in the organization of departmental and local development have closely followed economic policy options. Sectoral policies conducted in Congo since its accession to independence in 1960 have not succeeded in achieving balanced departmental and local development. As a strategy for reconstruction, the Five-Year Plan of 1982-1986 failed to reverse the colonial heritage of organization of the Congolese territory as a mere juxtaposition of local economies. Further, compounding factors, such as the remoteness of many localities, the ruinous condition of infrastructure in the absence of an effective maintenance policy, the shortage of equipment in the transport and energy sectors, the obstruction of river waterways, the deterioration of roads, government hotels, and residences, and the spoliation of government real estate property, have become more acute over the years.

The consequence of these numerous obstacles has been the narrowing of the economic base and an accentuation of spatial imbalance with significant disparities, which in turn precipitated a population exodus to the large urban centers. The two main agglomerations, Brazzaville (29.4 percent of inhabitants) and Pointe-Noire (23.8 percent of inhabitants), together account for over half of the population, although they do not offer the most satisfactory living conditions, and have very quickly reached saturation point. Employment in the public sector is the only hope for young people, but even this hope is soon likely to evaporate. With the reduction of public sector employment levels, the already shrunken private sector offers no viable alternative in this sluggish economic climate. Spatial imbalance coupled with unemployment accentuates poverty in the other communes (6.02 percent of inhabitants) and more particularly in semi-urban (7.14 percent of inhabitants) and rural (35.08 percent of inhabitants)¹ areas.

It is worth mentioning, that for several decades, the country's economic and financial environment has been very challenging making it impossible, despite the government's firm commitment, to reduce the disparities and imbalances among departments. The latter have considerably worsened poverty as a result of the paucity of basic infrastructure, proper facilities and equipment, production and marketing support structures, and vocational training centers. Congo's development is hampered by numerous dysfunctionalities, of which the most salient are under-equipment, extreme polarization around Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, uncontrolled urbanization and the collapse of the interior of the country.

The priorities for balanced departmental and local development are as follows: the departmental connecting network, departmental and local economies, departmental urban grid, and the institutional framework.

Regarding the departmental connecting network, one notes: (i) inadequate infrastructure resulting in poorly-connected areas and exacerbated remoteness; (ii) existing infrastructure of advanced age and in dilapidated condition; (iii) difficulty accessing power and telecommunications services; (iv) uncompetitive and unattractive territorial entities.

The departmental and local economies are characterized by: (i) a predominance of very low-productivity economic activities; (ii) an ageing active population; (iii) obsolete technologies; (iv) weak enhancement of natural potential; (v) precarious technical and financial support systems; (vi) underdeveloped and poorly distributed economic support services; (vii) poor marketing of products; (viii) an almost total absence of industry; (xi) ill-adapted local development.

Regarding the urban grid at the departmental and local level, issues of concern include (i) inadequate and inequitable distribution of facilities; (ii) precarious housing; (iii) dilapidated government buildings; and (iv) the spoliation of public assets.

¹ ECOM : 2005 Congolese household survey

Regarding the institutional framework, one notes the absence of organizational management tools (consultation framework, departmental and local development policy, financing framework) resulting in the duplication of actions initiated at the national, sectoral, and local levels.

2.4.1.1.3. Gender

Despite the adoption of several texts establishing gender equality before the law and the ratification of most international instruments promoting the same objective, in everyday life legal discrimination persists (tax law, criminal law, family law, social and economic rights) alongside de facto inequalities (levirate marriage, widowhood rituals, food taboos, succession, gender-specific violence). In practice, women also suffer discrimination in respect of labor (refusal of recruitment to certain posts on grounds of pregnancy) and economic law.

In schooling, disparities between girls and boys appear with the numbers of girls declining at higher levels. The gender parity index is 0.93 in primary school, 0.87 in middle school, 0.65 in high school and 0.58 at university level. Sixty-four percent of women are illiterate and the problem of functional illiteracy in the female population is of growing concern. In respect of health, the level of maternal mortality is very high (781 maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births), an increasing feminization of the AIDS epidemic has also been observed, with an average rate of 4.7 percent among women versus 3.8 percent among men.

With regard to the representation of women in political, elected, and administrative office, women hold eight seats out of 60 (13.3 percent) in the Senate; ten out of 137 (7.3 percent) in the National Assembly; five out of 39 (12.8 percent) in the government; four out of 21 (9.5 percent) in the Supreme Court; six out of 36 (16.67 percent) in the High Court of Justice; one out of nine (11.1 percent) in the Constitutional Court; three out of 18 in the Court of Auditors and Budgetary Discipline; one out of four heads of Courts of Appeal; and 12 percent in the departmental and municipal councils. There are no women serving as a Mayor of a commune, Prefect, or President of a departmental/communal Council.

Progress in the gender dimension is hindered by the following problems: (i) the absence of a national gender policy; (ii) weak levels of education; (iii) low representation of women in decision-making circles; (iv) persistence of impunity for acts of violence against women; (v) the weight of harmful traditional practices and customs owing to a lack of awareness on the part of women of their rights; (vi) and limited access to resources and means of production.

2.4.1.1.4. Environment

Air, water, and soil quality is of crucial importance for human, animal and plant life. Nowadays, people face real problems of environmental degradation and deterioration of their living conditions as ecosystems are disturbed and biodiversity threatened. A consequence of this situation is the noted increase in cardiovascular, pulmonary, carcinogenic, and acute diarrheic diseases as well as various allergies.

Noncompliance with urban development plans and land use rights is a root cause of the proliferation of shanty towns around large agglomerations, leaving the whole segment of the population living there in precarious conditions.

Built without prior environmental impact studies, the main communication arteries are a fairly significant locus of erosion as they do not have the appropriate engineering works to address rainwater runoff.

Intensive oil exploration, extraction of beach sand, and the increasing degradation of fragile ecosystems such as mangroves, which are spawning grounds, lead to a deterioration of tourist sites and nesting areas for marine turtles and endanger the marine environment and the reproduction cycle of fish.

Bush fires, wanton felling of trees, and poaching are harmful practices with serious environmental consequences. Low-performance, highly-polluting industries using obsolete technologies contribute dangerously to greenhouse gas emissions responsible for global warming. The absence of a regulatory framework for the importing of used cars and heavy vehicles coupled with the nonexistence of proper motor vehicle inspection centers causes accumulation of fine particles suspended in the air.

Further, the rapid degradation of aquatic ecosystems owing to the proliferation of invasive water plants, the use of banned crafts, explosives, and harmful chemicals, as well as sedimentation, could cause irreversible damage to water quality, with extremely serious consequences for fisheries resources and biodiversity as a whole. Changes to the environment or damage caused to the balance of ecosystems (soil, forests, the sea and fresh water) undermining the quality of life of populations often result from a lack of awareness and poor understanding of environmental issues.

Environmental management planning weaknesses are largely due to institutional and legal limitations as well as insufficient human resources resulting in the following main problems: (i) lack of environmental awareness by the population; (ii) nonexistence of municipal, industrial, and medical waste management plans; (iii) inadequate air, water and soil quality control capacity; (iv) insufficient account taken of environmental considerations in project preparation and implementation; (v) absence of environmental watch; (vi) proliferation of sources of noise pollution.

2.4.1.2. Peace and security

Congo is currently emerging from a decade of political instability marked by recurrent armed conflicts that have had a grave effect not only on the lives of people in both urban and rural areas but also on the country's economic and social infrastructure. Added to this, two main factors contribute to the continuing fragility of the peace and security situation: the inadequate socio-professional reintegration of ex-combatants and the inadequate training of some elements of the public forces.

Since the 1990s, there has been an upsurge in cases of sexual violence, incest, rape, and corporal violence committed against girls and women in the home and particularly during periods of armed conflict. To reduce conflict and guarantee lasting peace, in addition to adopting administrative measures to combat gender-specific violence, an important role was played by women, in particular, by organizing protest marches and joining negotiating structures. Traditional notables also participated in efforts to find solutions for restoring lasting peace and security to the country.

Thus, the ceasefire that entered into force in 2000 facilitated the adoption of the Constitution of January 20, 2002 and the holding of presidential, legislative, and local elections in 2002. The country has gradually returned to a climate of peace, security, and calm. The renewal of the Senate and the organization of legislative elections in June 2007, particularly in the Pool department, are positive manifestations of restored peace. Although largely completed, the process of emergence from conflict remains fragile.

The following problems disturb the quiet of the country and feed insecurity: (i) a weak culture of sanctions; (ii) the persistence of crime and deviant behaviors; (iii) inadequately trained elements of the public forces; (iv) the persistence of insecurity in Pool; (v) violence against women and girls; (vi) weak military condition.

Box: Progress of the National Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Program for ex-combatants and child soldiers (NDDRP)

- The primary objective of DDR is to consolidate peace. Its specific objectives are to: (i) demobilize ex-combatants and child soldiers and disarm ex-combatants and child soldiers; (ii) reintegrate ex-combatants and child soldiers into socio-economic life
- Activities carried out within the framework of the NDDRP can be summarized as follows:
- UNDP/IOM program launched in July 2000 and completed at end-November 2002
- Emergency program (PDR) implemented from October 2002 to February 2005;
- Specific DDR program for Pool “ninjas” implemented from March to September 2005;
- Implementation of the NDDRP approved in February 2005 by the MDRP Secretariat underway and expected to be completed in February 2009
- The NDDRP is designed as a comprehensive and coherent program, comprised of the following main components: (i) Disarmament, (ii) Demobilization and Reintegration of ex-combatants, (iii) Former child soldiers and ex-combatants with specific needs such as the war wounded, (iv) Prevention/reduction of conflicts and violence and (v) Reform of the security system.
- The overall objective of the NDDRP is to contribute to the strengthening of the peace process, to the political stability of the country, to national and, by extension, sub-regional security, national reconciliation, and social and economic reconstruction.
- The main specific objectives of the Program are: (i) disarm those illegally in possession of war weapons; (ii) demobilize and reintegrate ex-combatants into economic and social life; (iii) prevent the remobilization of self-demobilized ex-combatants; (iv) provide support to and promote the integration of war wounded former child soldiers and ex-combatants; (v) prevent and settle conflicts so as to contain violence; (vi) contribute to the ongoing reform of the defense and security system.
- The main expected outcomes are: (i) 31,000 weapons collected and destroyed; (ii) 19,000 ex-combatants, self-demobilized, reintegrated (including war wounded former child soldiers and ex-combatants); (iii) 5,000 combatants, currently still active in certain areas of Pool, demobilized and reintegrated (including child soldiers); (iv) 6,000 elements arising from the reform of the public forces demobilized, disarmed and reintegrated; (v) conflict and violence prevention observatory and warning system put in place.

2.4.1.3. Administrative and judicial governance

Administrative and judicial governance is characterized by non-respect of the institutional, legal and regulatory framework, the politicization of personnel, and the complexity, low level of dissemination to the general public, and non-application of texts, rules, and procedures.

Citizens who are unfamiliar with national laws and international treaties very seldom turn to the justice system for redress when their rights are violated. It should be pointed out that the lack of awareness of legal texts and procedures, the dysfunctionalities and distance of judicial structures, the dualism of traditional and modern systems of law, as well as the fear of “witchcraft” are all barriers that keep citizens, in general, and women in particular, from fully exercising their rights.

Other related reasons for this situation worthy of mention are: (i) the high cost of public services owing, among other things, to the plethora of confusing and rigid regulations that result in users having to comply with endless administrative and judicial formalities; (ii) the palm greasing required at various stages of the administrative and judicial circuit; (iii) the ineffectiveness of the judicial system, and (iv) the nonexistence of a national government reform policy. All of this leads to a very fragmented decision-making process involving multiple centers of decision-making and frequent recourse to discretionary power.

Governance in this area is, thus, characterized by: (i) the politicization of personnel and the non-respect of the institutional and regulatory framework; (ii) the development of fraud, corruption, and embezzlement; (iii) the complexity of texts and the slowness of administrative and judicial procedures; (iv) the blurring of roles between the justice system and the law enforcement services; (v) arbitrary arrests and unlawful police detention; (vi) lack of citizen awareness of judicial procedures and texts; (vii) inadequate staffing levels and poor human resource management; (viii) lack, and poor condition, of administrative and penitentiary infrastructure; (ix) weak national statistical data system.

Transparency, corruption and fraud

Weak governance has given rise to the development of corruption and fraud. According to a study on the perception of the problem, conducted in 2003 by the ministry in the Presidency responsible for government control, the areas most affected by fraud and corruption are: customs (86 percent), taxes (68.4 percent), the police service (67.5 percent), the courts (46.9 percent), schools (39.3 percent), the Treasury (37.2 percent), government works and services contracts (30.1 percent), health (28.6 percent), and town halls (25.6 percent). The study lists the three main causes of fraud and corruption as: lack of control in the administration (21.3 percent), low salary levels (12.7 percent), and the inefficiency of the judicial system (10.2 percent). Further, Transparency International's Report 2005 states that Corruption Perceptions Index (IPC) of the Republic of Congo is 2.3, ranking Congo in the 130th position out of a total of 158 country surveyed.

Generally speaking, it was pointed out that factors conducive to corruption are present wherever government agents have broad discretionary powers. They are not accountable for their actions and can act with impunity.

For decades, the legal and regulatory framework has been provided for disciplinary measures to punish the perpetrators of acts of fraud, corruption, and embezzlement, but, unfortunately, they are not applied. The main causes of corruption, embezzlement and fraud are lack of administrative control, low levels of remuneration, and the inefficient judicial system.

The following problems were identified: (i) lack of transparency in the management of public affairs; (ii) fraud, corruption, and embezzlement.

2.4.1.4 Economic and financial governance

Since independence, Congo has devised several programs or development plans that have failed to produce the expected levels of development. On the contrary, the country found itself with significant external and internal imbalances and a high level of indebtedness.

Indeed, from 1960 to 2005, Congo has recorded average annual per capita GDP growth of 1.38 percent, largely above the average for Sub-Saharan Africa, which remained below 1 percent over the period. Analysis of this figure shows contrasted trends that can be grouped into four periods: 1960-1974, 1975-1984, 1985-1999, and, lastly the first half of the 2000s. From 1960 to 1974, Congolese growth was driven essentially by the timber industry and the extraction of potash with contributions from agricultural production (food crops, coffee, and cocoa). In addition, its rail and river transport network made the country a transit point for neighboring countries.

From 1975 to 1984, the intensification of oil production, which, in addition, coincided with an increase in the price of oil on the world market, led to a deep processing of the structure of production of the country, with a sustained annual growth rate of 5.42 percent. This period was characterized by large-scale government intervention in economic activity, which created significant distortions in the structure of production and stymied the private sector. The 1985-1999 period saw a reversal of the economic situation. The macroeconomic imbalances and structural dysfunctions that had been masked by the windfall petroleum revenues deepened over this period.

Debt reached large proportions and the country became embroiled in armed conflict. Since 2000, the socio-political situation has been characterized by the end of conflict and a favorable trends in oil prices which has had a knock-on effect on other sectors and facilitated economic recovery. Significant reforms have been undertaken to dismantle the government monopolies of the 1980s with the privatization of some companies.

The achievement of pro-poor growth in the country is constrained by: (i) macroeconomic management weaknesses; (ii) poor productivity of physical and human capital; (iii) a narrow production base, and (iv) sensitivity of the economy to external shocks as a result of the predominance of the oil sector.

Macroeconomic management

The country shows significant weaknesses at various levels such as its system of allocation of petroleum resources, programming, execution of public investments, and transparency in procurement. In addition, the scope and multifaceted dimensions of poverty point to weaknesses in coordination of both government interventions and those of the development partners.

The government has, however, not yet put in place a formal structure to facilitate coordination of interventions in the context of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). There is a lack of synergy between PRS sectoral programs and no framework exists for the sharing of experience. Thus far, no structure has been established by the ministries of planning and finance to oversee the coordination of international assistance, and sectoral poverty reduction programs have been developed in a disparate fashion with no synergies built in to their action plans. Similarly, progress has been slow on mainstreaming the gender dimension into national, regional, and international policies for sustainable development with a view to fostering the economic empowerment of women. Another major weakness lies in the planning and implementation of public investments so as to create multiplier or catalytic effects to stimulate the development of activities in other sectors.

Weakness of physical and human capital

The poor condition of physical capital takes a heavy toll on economic growth and poverty reduction. The degradation of port, rail, and road infrastructure has reduced the intensity of traffic on the main economic axis linking Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire. The high cost of electricity, imported in part from the Democratic Republic of Congo, the deterioration of roads, in particular, farm roads, and the destruction of water supply infrastructure has severely eroded the competitiveness of the national economy because of the cross-cutting role of these factors of production. The government is aware of the problem and is striving to develop sectoral recovery programs.

With regard to human capital, labor productivity (real GDP per worker) is generally low, particularly in the non-oil sectors although these sectors are more labor intensive. This situation can be explained by several factors. The first is the mismatch that has developed over time between training and employment needs and the quality of the workforce as standards of workers' skills training have declined and training facilities have fallen by the wayside.

The second is the stagnation, or even shrinkage, of the employed labor force as a consequence of rural exodus, population ageing, and lower life expectancy at birth, itself a product of the deterioration of the health system and difficulty in accessing health care. Indeed, with the destruction that occurred during the wars, the country now has a shortage of health care facilities. The worsening of the health situation is borne out by other indicators, such as maternal, infant, and infant-child mortality. An upturn, or persistence, has also been noted in such diseases as malaria, acute respiratory infections, diarrheic diseases, tuberculosis, and AIDS, which adversely affect workers' productivity. The situation is no better in the education sector where there are similar infrastructure deficiencies and a shortage of teachers.

Narrowness of the production base

The challenges facing the Congolese production system include a weak private sector, inadequate structures of production, low levels of processing of agricultural products, degraded infrastructure, poor intersectoral links, a decline in manufacturing industries, and the absence of a guarantee fund that could help private operators access investment loans more easily.

There is no real policy or sectoral strategy that provides a conducive framework for promoting private sector development. The situation is not helped by the persistence of an economic model based on central planning and has indeed been further exacerbated by the fratricidal wars and successive conflicts as well as delays in the privatization process launched since 1994.

Weak integration of the national economy into the global market

This constitutes another major weakness of the Congolese economy which, in terms of exports, is dependent on only a few products (mainly oil and timber) and is a net food importer despite significant potential in this area. Integration of the Congolese economy in regional and international trade (excluding oil) also remains shallow, a situation that is due, in part, to the weak physical capital and narrow production base.

The following problems are broadly attributable to poor economic and financial governance: (i) weak capacity for developing policies and strategies; (ii) weak fiscal discipline; (iii) delays in the implementation of structural reforms, particularly in the oil sector, in the award of public works and services contracts, and in public investment management; (iv) complex and excessive regulations that breed corruption and economic inefficiency; (v) weak administrative and citizen control; (vi) weaknesses in public debt management.

2.4.1.4.1. Growth sectors and potential

2.4.1.4.1.1. Oil

Congo derives most of its resources from the oil sector (an average of 88 million barrels a year between 2000 and 2007)². The government is responsible for the management of the petroleum sector through the Hydrocarbons Ministry, while the National Petroleum Company of Congo (SNPC) is the operational arm. The revenues generated by this sector are extremely important as they represent around 66 percent of public revenue, over 50 percent of GDP, and close to 90 percent of export revenues.

The contribution from petroleum resources should make it possible to address two main challenges: (i) promote the growth and development of other sectors; (ii) contribute effectively to improving the living conditions of the whole population.

Analysis of the sector reveals constraints of several kinds of which the most significant are:

- *institutional constraints*: in spite of Law 24/94 of August 23, 1994 establishing the Hydrocarbons Code, conventions of establishment invoke the legal and fiscal stability clause, which provides for continuous granting of tax and customs exemptions. Furthermore, the enabling texts on the liquid and gas hydrocarbons have not yet been finalized.
- *marketing of the government's share of crude oil*: the SNPC markets 20 percent to 25 percent of the production of the Congo. One of the major problems noted is the weak

² Source: General Directorate of Hydrocarbons, 2007

oversight capacity of the management of the Djéno terminal, handled exclusively by private companies.

- *the interior of the country inadequately supplied with petroleum products*: outside of the major cities, there are significant supply disruptions related to problems of infrastructure quality, despite the privatization of the downstream activities, and transport difficulties between CORAF and the hinterland.

- *human resources*: national expertise needed to ensure effective management of the petroleum sector is in short supply. There are problems related to the management of training budgets included in the production sharing contracts.

The problems identified in this sector are as follows: (i) poor marketing and production control and monitoring; (ii) shortage of national expertise for efficient management of the petroleum sector; (iii) enabling texts of the liquid and gas hydrocarbons code not finalized; (iv) lack of transparency in the management of petroleum resources; (v) weak national technical expertise in petroleum operations; (vi) serious air and water pollution problems from oil production; (vii) frequent petroleum product supply disruptions.

2.4.1.4.1.2. Forestry

The forested area of Congo has been estimated at 22.5 million hectares, that is around 60 percent of the national territory, of which 80 percent are considered commercially viable. Standing mobilizable potential has been evaluated at 170 million m³ with the possibility of extracting two million m³ a year without compromising forest regenerative capacity. To this natural potential can be added 73,000 ha of eucalyptus, pine, and limba trees capable of producing a standing volume of 4 million m³.

The Congo has abundant and diverse fauna and flora composed of 6,500 plant species, 200 species of mammals, over 700 species of birds, 45 species of reptiles and more than 632 species of insects. The exploitation of non-timber forest products (gnetum, marantaceae, vines and rattan, barks, honey, etc.) is still largely dominated by the informal sector.

As the country's second largest resource, the forest contributes little to the composition of GDP (5.6 percent in 2006). This sector is faced with numerous problems: (i) the weak participation of local populations in the management of ecosystems; (ii) poor management of forestry resources; (iii) poor application of the provisions of the forestry code; (iv) fraudulent exploitation and illegal trade in forestry and fauna products; (v) low level of participation of nationals in the wood industry; (vi) underdevelopment of processing activities.

2.4.1.4.1.3. Rural development

The contribution of agriculture, livestock, and fisheries to the national economy remains modest despite the huge available potential: 10 million ha of arable land of which only 2 percent is exploited; abundant rainfall of between 1200 mm and 1800 mm with peaks up to 2000 mm; a hot and humid tropical climate that makes for agro-ecological diversity. Agriculture and fisheries production is not sufficient to ensure food security in Congo. The agropastoral sector contributed 3.4 percent to the composition of GDP in 2006 (DGE, 2006).

In response to the large food deficit, the country has increasingly been resorting to costly imports (over CFAF 100 billion in 2005) causing massive outflows of foreign currency that could instead have been used to finance rural development, thus accentuating its food dependence on the outside world from year to year. Although Congo is covered by rivers, the arts and crafts fishing does not produce enough to meet the population's needs for fisheries products.

The share of agriculture, livestock, and fisheries in GDP moved from 27.13 percent in 1960, to 11.69 percent in 1980, 9.57 percent in 1997, and 6 percent in 2006 (DGE, 2007).

a) Agriculture

As a result of the rudimentary technical used, agricultural production is weak. The very large production shortfall is offset by massive food imports.

Food production is weak and agricultural yields are modest. In some departments, several crops have developed diseases, considerably lowering productivity. In production zones, because of poor road conditions or lack of markets, seasonal products remain unsold and rot on the ground. This discourages farmers and leads to a reduction in surface area sown. Cash crops which used to be planted in some localities have been abandoned following the government withdrawal from the sector without providing any guarantees for continuity of production and marketing.

Plant production is carried out essentially by small subsistence farmers. The number of people actively engaged in agricultural has dropped sharply, down from 500,000 in 1980 to 300,000 in 2005. The average cultivated land area per grower is around one hectare. Inputs such as improved seeds, animal feed, and phytosanitary and veterinary products are only marginally used by farmers, of which 63 percent of those active are women. Agricultural production is weak and covers less than 30 percent of the country's food needs.

Faced with a lack of personnel, financial resources, and facilities, agriculture research centers have had to curtail their activities, which also contributed to declines in production. In fact, there is only limited availability of improved seeds and cuttings anywhere in the country.

In general, improvements in agricultural production and productivity are impeded by: (i) the absence of a national agricultural policy; (ii) archaic and rudimentary farming practices; (iii) lack of assistance and support for farmers; (iv) weak storage and processing infrastructure; and (v) inadequate transport links to facilitate the marketing of produce from the departments.

b) Livestock farming

Two types of livestock farming are practiced in Congo: traditional extensive and semi-intensive peri-urban. Some 36 percent of Congolese households engage in animal husbandry (cattle, sheep, pigs, goats) and poultry rearing (hens, cocks, ducks, guinea fowl, etc) either in pens or free range. The two main types of cattle bred are ndama and laguna. Before the armed conflicts of 1997, government-run ranches owned 12,000 heads, expatriates and national owned 8,000, with 52,000 owned by farmers themselves, that is 74,000 heads. Government withdrawal, coupled with the massive destruction brought about by armed conflicts and looting, led to the decline of the livestock sector. The corollary of weak local meat production is the strong presence on the national market of imported animal products—over 75 percent of meat and meat products and 100 percent of dairy products.

In addition to cattle, the other types of livestock by size of production are: poultry (2,184,600 heads), sheep/goats (183,600 heads) and pigs (110,600 heads). These herds have been subject to various pathologies, of which the most important are: haemoparasites in cattle, African swine fever, Newcastle disease in poultry, parasites of the digestive tract, and recently the appearance in some departments of pest of small ruminants.

The problems encountered in the livestock sub-sector are as follows: (i) absence of an adequate livestock policy; (ii) absence of a genuine policy to promote the establishment of breeding units; (iii) lack of support structures; (iv) weak veterinary sector; (v) poor human and institutional capacities in the sector (vi) absence of conservation and processing facilities.

c) Fisheries

The reduction in fishing areas caused by oil production activities in maritime waters, the invasion of waterways by plants, and the silting up of the river Congo and its tributaries, as well as by trees trunks blocking the passage of pirogues in forestry areas, poses a whole range of difficulties for the fisheries and aquaculture sector. Nonetheless, this sector has quite a lot of potential, despite the many constraints noted in implementing sectoral programs.

The major obstacles to fisheries development are: (i) absence of a national fisheries policy; (ii) weak development of the continental and maritime fisheries sector; (iii) little development of the aquaculture sector; (iv) weak conservation and processing infrastructure; (v) expertise deficit in the fisheries sector as a whole; (vi) insufficient attention paid to ensuring the sustainability of resources; and (vii) deficiencies in the judicial and institutional framework.

2.4.1.4.1.4. Mines

Congo's sub-soil is rich in minerals and fossil fuel resources that are still largely unexplored. In spite of the existing gap in detailed, confirmed geological information, several indications of deposits of gold, diamonds, potash, base metals, iron, bituminous sandstone, and other mineral substances for agricultural and industrial use have been inventoried. Prospection and research activities are conducted exclusively by private companies and have, unfortunately, not attained the desired level of development.

The sector is still grappling with the following challenges: (i) inadequacies regarding issuing of the enabling texts for Law 4-2005 of April 11, 2005 establishing the mining code; (ii) absence of a sectoral master plan; (iii) inadequate facilities and appropriate administrative tools and deficiencies in the basic training, continuing education and skills enhancement of senior staff; (iv) disorganized arts and crafts gold and diamond mining sector (v) very limited knowledge and information on the national sub-soil and lack of basic infrastructure for geological research and analysis; (vi) poor monitoring of public-private partnership agreements; (vi) shortage and ageing of senior technical managers.

2.4.1.4.1.5. Tourism

Although the country is quite well endowed with natural potential in this area, tourism sector remains underdeveloped. Several factors account for this, including: (i) the failure to put in place an appropriate sectoral strategy conducive to boosting development in the sector; (ii) inadequate hotel infrastructure and poor transport facilities; (iii) deficiencies in hotel and tourism training; (iv) few private operators present in the sector; (v) too little development of tourist sites and limited access to them.

2.4.1.4.1.6. Arts and Crafts

In Congo, there is no official text that provides a definition of arts and crafts or the profession of artisan/craftsperson. A draft law (Article 4) regulating the exercise of the profession of artisan/craftsperson, currently before the National Assembly for adoption, describes arts and crafts trades as any activity consisting in extraction, production, processing, repair, and provision of services, to the exclusion of activities that are commercial by nature, and agricultural or intellectual activities.

Similarly, there is no official nomenclature of arts and crafts trades apart from the one prepared by the national arts and crafts board, which defines around one hundred of them. The trades are subdivided into three (3) sectors, namely: (i) arts, consisting essentially of

trades involving the making and marketing of objects of mainly esthetic, cultural, and recreational value; (ii) production crafts, involving the making of goods for ordinary use; and (iii) service trades, involving small-scale distribution of goods and provision of everyday services.

The arts and crafts sector has several positive features for spurring development notably: (i) an institutional and judicial environment spearheaded by the arts and crafts ministry and support structures (the national arts and crafts board, the agency for development of SMEs, the SME guarantee and support fund, the Congolese external trade center, the national employment and labor office, consular chambers, technical and vocational training institutes, and various associations); (ii) significant human capital in the form of artisans with seasoned expertise in the areas of basketry, joinery, woodwork and metalwork, ceramics, pottery, couture, textiles, painting, etc; (iii) natural resources of flora, fauna, and other mining reserves; (iv) financial and technical assets driven by the development of microfinance (Congolese savings and loan mutual fund, etc)

The major problems of the sector are: (i) inefficiency of the support institutions; (ii) excessive weight of taxes and the multiplicity of administrative, municipal, and police red tape; (iii) weaknesses of basic infrastructure such as water, electricity, and communication networks; (iv) raw material supply problems; (v) difficulty accessing new technologies; (vi) difficulty accessing credit; (vii) unavailability of risk coverage.

2.4.1.4.2. Growth support sectors

2.4.1.4.2.1. Transport

The collapse of Congo's transport sector is attributable to a mismatch between objectives set and resources allocated, lack of coherence in the construction and maintenance of infrastructure and equipment, and means of transport. Moreover, the present judicial context is not conducive to attracting foreign investment and there have been delays in the implementation of the national transportation plan (NTP). These shortcomings adversely affect the productive sectors of the economy, leading to their gradual decline. In this section, analysis of the transport situation focuses on road, rail, river, maritime, and air transport modes.

a) Road transport

The road network comprises around 17,300 km, including 1,300 km of paved roads that are not easily practicable. It is broken down as follows: 3,920 km of national roads; 4,211 km of departmental roads; 2,811 km of roads of local interest; 6,358 km of tracks and unclassified roads. This classification, known as the NTP classification, done on the basis of specific criteria includes: 1,918 km of transit roads; 601 km of roads for the preservation of existing investment; 4,032 km of roads for access to isolated areas and coherence of the transport system, and maintenance roads for the sub-regional exchanges, that is, a little over 6,551 km of roads deemed to make up the priority network. The forestry road network, established by the Congolese forestry industry, is connected to the public network via national roads 1, 3, and 6 (RN1, RN 3, and RN6).

The urban road network is in very bad condition and is often impracticable. In some cases, access to entire districts that have sprung up on the edge of cities is haphazard and certain areas of residence are totally unserved. There are no specific agreements between city authorities and transport operators, which in part explains the disorganization of urban transportation. Further, in the absence of structured road transportation companies, urban transportation is provided exclusively by private entrepreneurs operating in the informal sector.

Road traffic is characterized by insufficient roads, the dilapidated condition of the existing network and scant maintenance. The administration is also underequipped and there is a lack of compliance with standards for road building and structural engineering works.

Regarding road management and administration, most SMEs are established outside the departmental capitals and the land transport administration is nonfunctional. In respect of the road maintenance fund, funds collected by the Treasury are transferred neither automatically, in full, nor on a timely basis, thus restricting the emergence of small and medium-sized enterprises to take up the work of the Congolese road maintenance office (OCER).

b) Rail transport

The Congo-Ocean Railway (CFCO) is in a worrying condition partly because of the very advanced age of the superstructure. All the engineering structures that were damaged during the sociopolitical events have been fully repaired. However, the buildings in the stations destroyed have not yet been rehabilitated.

The main 510 km-long CFCO railway line from Brazzaville to Pointe-Noire has only one track. The new 91 km section, built 13 years ago, has also fallen into some disrepair for lack of maintenance. There is also an infrequently used line stretching 285 km between Mont Mbélo and Gabonese border.

Population mobility is limited by a combination of continued insecurity in the Pool department, high ticket costs and poor service quality. Facilities and equipment are obsolete and in insufficient quantity. Platforms have been damaged along numerous sections of track and ballast is in poor condition. The Brazzaville terminal depot and workshop were dismantled and the buildings of some secondary stations lack even the most minimal facilities and equipment.

Given its inadequate fleet of freight cars and traction and handling equipment, the CFCO has found it impossible to do away with the bottlenecks in the trans-Congolese transport chain, thus forcing haulers to resort to either transshipment of their merchandise via the port of Matadi or by air bridge. On another note, the age pyramid of the CFCO shows that in five years time the average age of more than 60 percent of the staff will be 60 years.

c) River transport

In view of the current situation regarding Congo's communication infrastructure, the river transport sector serves all the departments in North Congo given their difficult access by road. River transport also remains the mode of choice for heavy transport, in particular wood, making it possible to serve the Brazzaville–Bangui link and offering possibilities of opening to the regions in the interior of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the east of Cameroon, and the south of the Central African Republic.

The navigable waterways totaling some 5000 km, along with the inter-State waterways are well monitored and maintained by the common navigable waterways maintenance service (SCEVN).

Despite the recent resumption of activity by the national private sector, transport capacity has dropped sharply as a result of the ageing and shortage of equipment, owing in part to destruction during armed conflict. The ports (autonomous port of Brazzaville and secondary ports) face problems of weakened port facilities and vandalism. In addition, lack of dredging, and low-water periods, which now last for more than four months in the case of the Oubangui and Sangha rivers, make navigation on these waterways difficult.

d) Maritime transport

The infrastructure and facilities of the Autonomous Port of Pointe-Noire (PAPN) are in poor condition and are increasingly unable to handle container traffic. For the most part, terrepleins and quaysides are in very bad shape, while electricity and water and sanitation networks on the port are defective, making for very punishing operating conditions and reducing port performance considerably. Consequently, the PAPN is losing competitiveness to neighboring ports in particular, the ports of Matadi, Douala, Luanda, Owendo, and Cotonou.

Safety and pollution control are other aspects of maritime transport to which greater attention should be paid. In spite of efforts to put in place the necessary structures for maritime safety and security, proper facilities for maritime surveillance and adequate protection of the marine environment are still lacking.

e) Air transport

At the Maya-Maya international airport, the runway shows slab flapping deterioration, caused by ageing of the base, and the airport terminal building and cargo areas are very old. However, operating conditions are satisfactory at the Agostino Neto airport in Pointe-Noire following rehabilitation work on the runway and terminal building.

Rehabilitation and construction works are underway at the Dolisie and Ollombo secondary airport hubs. Most of the secondary aerodromes, of which some are not well served and others virtually abandoned, would, if rehabilitated, facilitate the opening up of remote parts of the country. Progress on privatization of the national airline has been very slow, while the sub-regional company, Air-CEMAC, is having difficulty getting off the ground despite commitments made by Community Heads of State.

Air transport is provided by foreign private enterprises and by private entities incorporated under Congolese law. Domestic air traffic faces problems of ageing aircraft and deficient airport structures. Further, air transport costs are not conducive to easing travel across the country. Recent acquisitions of meteorological equipment and instruments have allowed some stations to resume their activities.

In general terms, the transport sector is constrained by delays in implementing the national transport plan, noncompliance with transport infrastructure building standards, and the poor quality of services. Amongst the modes of transport, apart from maritime traffic, various shortcomings were observed in road, rail, river, and air transport.

In respect of road transport, the following problems were noted: (i) insufficiently developed road network; (ii) rundown condition of the existing road network; (iii) absence of structured road transport companies; (iv) non-existence of vehicle inspection entities; (v) deficiencies in the collection, management, and mobilization of road maintenance funds; (vi) weak administrative capacity.

In respect of rail transport, the problems are as follows: (i) ageing of the CFCO; (ii) inadequate transport and traction equipment; (iii) ageing of personnel.

In respect of river transport, the following problems were encountered: (i) lack of maintenance of navigable waterways; (ii) weak port facilities; (iii) inadequate of the river transport equipment; (iv) advanced age of the fleet.

In respect of maritime transport, the problems are the following: (i) deficient PAPN electricity, water and sanitation network; (ii) unsatisfactory port installations; (iii) insufficient dredging; and (iv) lack of equipment for proper maritime surveillance.

In respect of air transport the problems are as follows: (i) inadequacies in airport structures at the major airports; (ii) unreliable aircraft; (iii) insufficient meteorological coverage.

2.4.1.3.2.2. Electrical energy

Electricity problems are multiple: production is insufficient, distribution is of poor quality, and power cuts are frequent. When not out of service, power plants function only sporadically. Some departments are not connected to the electricity grid, although high tension lines pass through them.

The national territory is very poorly supplied with electrical energy. As kerosene is rare and expensive, households develop substitution strategies for domestic lighting by resorting to oil lamps.

Congo's hydroelectric potential, evaluated at 2500 MW, is relatively untapped. According to ECOM, only 27.7 percent of the total population of Congo has access to electricity. In fact, in rural areas, only 5.6 percent of the population have access to electricity versus 44.6 percent in urban areas. The inaccessibility of electricity explains why people massively resort to wood fuel, charcoal, gas, and kerosene for domestic needs. The lack of energy limits national development initiatives and is one of the contributory factors to high production costs. It is also a disincentive for potential investors.

In addition, the national electricity company (SNE), which is the main operator in the sector, faces collection problems resulting in significant revenue shortfalls on invoiced amounts. For example, in the first quarter of 2005, the rate of collection was just 56.7 percent. This situation results in an implied subsidy to non-payers from those who pay, without any particular targeting. Among households that effectively use the services of the SNE, more than half of the 20 percent poorest were either unable or unwilling to pay their bills during the survey period, while the figure was just 20 percent for the richest households. Financial constraints therefore appear to be one of the factors that lead households not to pay their bills.

The problems facing the electricity sector are: (i) inadequate and very old production facilities; (ii) a deficient and very old grid; (iii) low level of electrification in the countryside; (iv) poor performance of the public operator (SNE); and (v) insufficient use of renewable energies.

2.4.1.3.2.3. Communication

In 1960, Congo inherited the infrastructure of the Equatorial Posts and Telecommunications Office (OEPT), bequeathing it to the national posts and telecommunications network administered by the National Posts and Telecommunications Office (ONPT) established by Law 16/64 of July 24, 1964.

The sociopolitical events that took place in the country destroyed the production tools of the two (2) sectors. The Law of 1994 on the privatization of state enterprises and Law 08-2000 of the July 2, 2000, separated the ONPT into two (2) distinct entities, the Congo Posts and Savings Company (SOPECO) for the postal sector and the Congo Telecommunications Company (SOTELCO) for the telecommunications sector.

Regarding the postal service, of the country's 111 post offices 58 were closed. The public service was reduced in terms of distribution of postal products with 19,000 post boxes of

which 14,680 distributed. Neighborhood services and home delivery of mail declined markedly. Today, there are private operators in the market (GX international, DHL, etc).

With regard to the telecommunications sector, fixed telephony consists of only two (2) inter-urban lines: Brazzaville-Pointe-Noire and Brazzaville-Oyo, with 14,840 subscribers, that is, a density of 4.2 per thousand. There has been a considerable boom in mobile telephony concentrated around three (3) companies, CELTEL and MTN for GSM and CYRUS for DMPS. The number of mobile telephone subscribers at December 31, 2007 stood at 1,380,000, broken down into 1,000,000 for CELTEL, 380,000 for MTN, and 5,502 for CYRUS, which has restricted the scope of its activities. After receiving the necessary authorizations, the mobile telephone company, WARID Telecom, established in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, launched its operations on January 10, 2008. The sector is, however, challenged by the paucity of well-qualified personnel with up-to-date skills in ICTs and weak Internet development as the country is not connected to a fiber optic network.

Regarding mass media, the challenges include inadequate radio and television coverage of the national territory given the age and/or absence of appropriate technical equipment, the non-existence of proper technical structures, particularly in rural areas, and the dilapidated state of administrative and technical buildings. This sector also faces difficulty arising from lack of statistical data on newspaper production and publication and the failure to enact enabling texts for laws passed.

Regarding the print media, the government controls the Congolese News Agency (ACI) and the newspaper, *La Nouvelle République*. The training center for information and communication professionals (CFPPIC) created in Brazzaville is still not operational for lack of equipment and facilities. Another shortcoming is the absence of genuine media companies, although there are private newspapers and radio and television stations. There is also a media documentation center.

The proximity of the capitals of the two Congos, Brazzaville and Kinshasa, and non-compliance with the standards of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) make it difficult to manage the frequency spectrum because of numerous interferences.

The posts, telecommunications, and ICTs sector faces the following problems: (i) weak institutional and judicial framework; (ii) limited postal service; (iii) very limited and unreliable fixed telephone network; (iv) high cost of mobile telephone communications; (v) weak Internet development; (vi) absence of enabling texts for communication sector laws; (vii) low media capacities (advanced age of technical buildings and facilities, lack of skilled personnel); (viii) inadequate coverage of the national territory.

2.4.1.3.2.4. Meteorological services

Despite being a cross-cutting area of interest to all sectors that support growth, the meteorological service is reduced to being exclusive to air transport. Under the present circumstances, however, its development is not feasible although the service is underutilized and has numerous possibilities open to it.

The reason for this is the dearth of financial, human, and material resources necessary for it to function. It is characterized by chronic underfunding, insufficient and obsolete technical equipment and facilities, insufficient and low-skilled staff. All weather data are collected manually.

The following problems have been identified: (i) affiliation of the meteorological service exclusively to air transport; (ii) insufficient development of applied research in meteorology and in operational hydrography; (iii) advanced age of technical equipment; (iv) lack of skills and ageing of staff.

2.4.1.3.2.5. Private sector development

Expansion of the private sector in the Republic of Congo was to some extent slowed by the ideology, which a few decades ago, underpinned government economic policy. The latter discouraged national private initiative and regulated certain economic activities, giving public enterprises a de facto monopoly, while attaching little importance to putting in place support structures and incentives to encourage emergence of the private sector, in particular SMEs/SMIs.

In 1986, the Congolese authorities decided to give priority to the private sector in general, and SMEs/SMIs in particular, in its economic and social strategy by passing Law 019/86 dated July 31, 1986 establishing a new institutional framework for the promotion of SMEs/SMIs.

After a promising start, the institutional apparatus failed to live up to expectation in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. The institutional environment remained ill-adapted to SMEs/SMIs and the support structures (the guarantee and support fund and the agency for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises) did not play their role effectively. The difficult climate for such enterprises in accessing financial markets is not conducive to accelerated private sector development. In 2004, research on microenterprises in Pointe Noire showed that barely 15 percent of the enterprises keep their books and that only 12 percent have a steady relationship with banking institutions through the opening of accounts.

In terms of real support to industry, SMEs/SMIs in 2007, government operating expenditure amounted to 0.978 percent and investment 2.241 percent. These data indicate the deficiencies in government support both to administrations in charge of private sector development and in the form of direct support for the creation of industrial infrastructure as a means of increasing opportunities for attracting private local and foreign investment.

In sum, the private sector consists of the: (i) formal private sector, generally dominated by SMEs and SMIs that comply with all or almost all administrative requirements in the area of taxation, licenses, registration, and regulations; (ii) informal urban private sector made up of small production units established in the cities, usually microenterprises outside of the tax base, control, and general regulatory framework of the administration; (iii) traditional private sector, concentrated essentially in the subsistence or small-scale agriculture sector and the rural services sector, generally without any market activity.

The Congolese private sector is, thus, characterized by a predominance of individual enterprises (sole proprietorships), reflecting a fairly peculiar entrepreneurial culture in which the setting up of companies seems to be the exception. Such a configuration has major implications on the system of governance of the enterprises.

Among the problems encountered by private sector actors, the most commonly mentioned are: (i) rundown infrastructure; (ii) inappropriate regulations and taxation; (iii) ineffectiveness of the judicial system; (iv) weak support services; (v) limited access to financing; and (vi) meager managerial capacities.

a) Industry

The industrial sector is dominated by the extractive industry, constituted essentially of oil production. Industrial production, though not very diversified, is steadily increasing and is in hands of a few large enterprises as well as some micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises mostly from the informal sector. An important feature of this sector is its strong concentration in the cities of Pointe-Noire and Brazzaville.

The largest industrial enterprises operate in the agrofood, petrochemicals and derivatives, construction materials, timber, metallurgy, and mechanical and metal works sectors, while various small and medium-sized enterprises cover a range of other activities. It should also be mentioned that Congolese industry has generally not kept pace with global technological change. According to a survey conducted in the first half of 2003 by the general directorate for industry, the industrial sector counts around 798 establishments from the public, public/private, and private sectors.

The problems of Congolese industry are as follows: (i) underdeveloped industries; (ii) enterprises operating in an environment that not promote efficiency and competitiveness.

b) Trade

Previously dominated by public structures and a few foreign private trading posts, today Congolese trade is characterized by the coexistence of two types of activity: informal trade and legal or structured trade.

Informal trade occupies a significant place in economic activity but its contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) is not known. In spite of this, the sector is clearly a source of employment and an alternative to the critical unemployment problems among young people as well as an important lever for poverty reduction. Further, informal trade represents a very important source of supply for our cities and countryside, in particular for low-income groups.

Legal trade is carried out by all persons, nationals or foreigners, who are holders of cards recognizing them as professionals or traders and registered with the official institutions.

There are numerous problems in the trade sector of which the main ones are: (i) noncompliance with regulations; (ii) weak organizational capacity of the sector; (iii) weak participation of the country in sub-regional trade.

c) Banks and finance

Since the 1980s, the Congolese financial sector has deteriorated and remains narrow, undiversified and low-performing. It does not participate in the medium and long-term financing of the economy, offering only very short-term loans at high costs. Another aspect is the nonexistence of specialized financial institutions.

Alongside the traditional banking sector, microfinance has developed offering financial services tailored to the needs of poor population groups. The first savings and loan cooperatives were set up in the 1980s. In the 2000s, the microfinance sector started to develop in response to several factors, mainly the crisis in the national banking system, which resulted in the liquidation and privatization of some banks, the advent of liberalization that facilitated the expansion of private enterprise, the economic crisis coupled with repeated civil wars pauperizing the population and the emergence of the initiatives in all sectors.

The development of microfinance activity took place in two main phases. Prior to 2002, the sector was unregulated with only the savings and loan cooperatives (COOPEC) governed by a text placing them under the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. Following the bankruptcy of COOPEC, the MUCODEC network emerged in 1990 and ushered in the regulatory phase of microfinance institutions with the publication of the regulatory framework of April 13, 2002 by the Central African Banking Commission (COBAC).

The microfinance sector has experienced enormous difficulties such as weak competence in management, technology and the collection of savings. In addition, because of the aversion of actors in the sector, rural areas are underserved. Other factors that could be mentioned

are deficiencies in the treatment and analysis of financial statements and the fact that no policy or strategy has been put in place to support the development of the sector.

To date, 74 microfinance institutions (40 independent and 34 in networks) have been authorized to operate throughout the national territory and the number of MFIs has continued to grow since 2003. However, because of the inexperience of some actors in the sector, the unrealistic ambitions of some promoters on opening this type of institutions, and the constraints arising from the application of the CEMAC regulations, since 2004 the sector has also seen the closure of a large number of institutions.

This sector has enormous difficulties related to: (i) the deterioration, narrowness, and lack of diversification of the banking sector; (ii) weak financing of the national economy; (iii) a service offering of short-term credit at high rates; (iv) absence of a policy and strategy to develop the sector; (v) weak competence in savings collection and management; (vi) risk aversion of some operators in the sector; (vii) poor mastery of the basic texts on microfinance by promoters and those responsible for control of the sector.

2.4.1.3.2.6. Sub-regional integration

Congo is a member of several regional integration organizations in Central Africa, notably CEMAC comprising Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and Chad. The Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC), which is older, brings together, in addition to the six CEMAC countries, Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sao Tomé and Príncipe.

Congo's exports to CEMAC member countries, mainly Gabon, represent only 3 percent of intra-regional trade, while its imports, essentially foodstuffs from Cameroon, represent 43.6 percent. In the case of CEEAC, intra-community trade is insignificant and in decline.

Despite the attempts at cooperation within the framework of these organizations, there has been little progress and the results have fallen short of expectations. For instance, the share of CEMAC intra-regional trade is no more than 5 percent of the external trade of its member countries³. A relative decline in percentage terms of exports within CEMAC has been noted, down from 2.1 percent in 1995 to 0.9 percent in 2005.

Other characteristics of CEMAC are the low level of movement of factors of production (labor and capital) and consequent immobility of these factors. The job market is not integrated, with very few CEMAC workers in other member countries. The economies of CEMAC countries tend to be specialized in line with their respective comparative advantages and there is a trend toward the equalization of the remuneration of factors of production.

The low level of trade between Congo and the other member countries of the two regional economic communities is attributable to both structural and institutional causes.

With regard to structural causes, mention could be made of: (i) specialization of the economies that is not very conducive to the establishment of intra-regional trade (primary specialization of the countries); (ii) little diversification of the economies within CEMAC; (iii) poor infrastructure for the transport of goods; and (iv) political instability and the post-conflict situation of several countries of the sub-region.

Regarding institutional causes, one notes: (i) the imperfect customs union in respect of the common external tariff (THIS); (ii) administrative and technical barriers to intra-regional trade; (iii) the slowness of export and import procedures; (iv) safeguard clause invoked to delay or

³ CEA (2004), Les économies de l'Afrique centrale, Maisonneuve et Larousse, Paris.

even call into question the integration process; and (v) utilization of procedures such as rules of origin to limit the development of intra-regional trade.

The whole CEMAC region is confronted, among other things, with problems related to: (i) the unsatisfactory efforts made by the various member States to remove barriers to trade particularly in respect of communications infrastructure; (ii) the failure to disseminate widely and apply community texts; (iii) the multiplicity of administrative controls hampering the movement of people and goods; (iv) the poor competitiveness of national economies.

2.4.2. Social sectors

2.4.2.1. Education

The education sector is characterized by the concentration of qualified teaching staff in major cities to the detriment of rural areas. The shortage of school facilities has led people to build schools or convert their homes into classrooms. There are few good quality, national technical schools and vocational training centers. Because of the high cost of schooling and the distance of school facilities from areas of residence, parents choose to enroll some of their children in school and keep others at home. Girls, because of their vulnerability and the fact that they are often predestined for marriage, are the main victims of early removal from school.

2.4.2.1.1. Basic and secondary education

Basic education includes preschool, primary school, the first cycle of secondary schooling, and non-formal education. After a decline in school enrolment at the end of the 1990s because of the troubles in the country, the performance of the Congolese education system improved in quantitative terms in 2005 as compared to the start of the decade. Between 1999 and 2005, the number of children in school multiplied by 3.9 in preschool, by 2.2 in primary school, 2.1 in middle school, and 1.7 in high school. Over the same period, gross enrolment rates rose from 2 percent to 7.3 percent in preschool, from 59 to 111 percent at primary level, from 35 to 61 percent in middle school, and from 13 to 19 percent at high school level (RESEN, 2007).

Preschool: Between 1995 and 2005, the number of preschoolers in school grew by 24 percent a year on average, boosted by private sector contributions in the two main cities of the country (Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire) bringing schools closer to learners. Notwithstanding the establishment of numerous private centers, the preschool gross enrolment rate is still low (7.3 percent in 2005).

Primary school: School coverage showed a considerable drop in the gross enrolment rate between 1995 (117 percent) and 2000 (57 percent) owing to the markedly weaker capacity of the system to accept all children of primary school age over the period. Since 2002, the situation has improved, with the gross enrolment rate climbing from 83 percent in 2002 to 111 percent in 2005 as schools reopened across the country.

In respect of school progression, the gross intake rate, which is the first point of the school enrolment profile, increased in 2005 (GIR: 95 percent) by 33 points compared to 2002 (GIR: 62 percent). In spite of this progression, the system still lacks the capacity to receive all primary school age children. The ratio of pupils completing primary schooling in 2005 (73 percent), compared to the gross intake rate (GIR: 95 percent), shows 77 percent retention.

Middle school: The coverage rate for general education middle school is less than half of the reference group, with a gross enrolment rate fluctuating between 46 percent and 61 percent between 2000 and 2005. In respect of intake, the gross intake rate for entry into the first year

of middle school is just 66 percent. Transition from the primary to the secondary level stood at a rate of 77 percent. The completion rate, that is, the proportion of pupils having progressed through all the classes in the first cycle of secondary school was 39 percent for the same year. In relation to the intake rate, this shows a retention rate of 69.6 percent.

High school: The pressure of social demand for education is not strong at high school level, with the gross enrolment rate at 27 percent in 1996 and in almost continuous decline since then, to the point that a gross enrolment rate of 19 percent was recorded in 2005.

In 2005, access to this level of schooling showed a gross intake rate of 14 percent, which represents around one (1) in 10 young people of age to enter the second cycle of secondary school (16 years).

In the general education system, the second cycle of secondary level education has the highest overall retention rate of 79 percent, versus 77 percent for the primary level, and 69.6 percent for the first cycle of secondary schooling. In high school, the completion rate was 56 percent in 2005.

However, although in quantitative terms the results are relatively satisfactory, from a qualitative standpoint, a lot remains to be done. Indeed, 5 percent of school age children are still excluded from compulsory schooling. This group is made up of girls (gender parity index of 1.10 in preschool, 0.95 at primary level, 0.85 in middle school and 0.5 in high school), children born to very poor parents (50.7 percent living below the poverty line), indigenous children (32.6 percent for boys and 21 percent for girls), and children living with mental or motor disabilities.

In addition, among children entering school the number of dropouts is high, resulting in a primary school retention rate of 77 percent in 2005 (RESEN).

Table 6: Key indicators for the basic and secondary education sub-sector (in percent), Congo 2005

Indicators		1990	2000	2005	Target 2015
Gross enrolment rate	Preschool	2.8	2.9	7.3	25
	Primary	135	87	111	107
	Middle school	69	46	61	80
	High school	17	15	19	50
Repeater rate	Primary	29.9	24.9	24.4	10
	Middle school	n.a.	22.3	26.3	10
	High school	n.a.	30.9	25.4	10
Net primary school enrolment rate		90.60	n.a.	72	100
Literacy rate (15 to 24 years)		92.5	96	80.4	95
Primary school completion rate		n.a.	n.a.	73	100

Source: RESEN and National plan MDGs

Basic and secondary education is in deep structural crisis as a result of: (i) the flight of teachers to better paying sectors; (ii) poor human resources and pedagogical management; (iii) unequal distribution of the conditions of education supply with imbalances between urban areas (overcrowded classes) and rural areas (shortage of teachers, multigrade classes, incomplete cycles); (iv) shortage of school houses, books, and equipment and supplies; (v) deterioration of the status of teachers; (vi) absence of social services (boarding schools, school canteens, health services, etc.); and (vii) little attention to specificity (gender, indigenous people, people with disabilities, etc.).

2.4.2.1.2. Technical and vocational education

Technical and vocational education (TVE), which accounts for 10 percent of students in middle school versus 37 percent of high schoolers, suffers from the same shortcomings and dysfunctionalities as basic education.

In 2004, there were 99 public technical and vocational institutions (75 1st cycle and 13 2nd cycle technical institutions as well as 11 vocational institutions) unequally distributed throughout the national territory. Most public sector and private sector institutions are situated mainly in four cities (Brazzaville 63, Pointe-Noire 34, Dolisie two, and Ouessou one).

Out of 15,397 teachers in the public sector, there are 1,914 in TVE, that is, 12.4 percent. This number is composed of 1,079 civil servants, of which 254 women, and 835 so-called volunteers whose status is precarious. There are 1,709 teachers in private institutions, including 145 women.

Inequalities in school enrolment as a function of standard of living are more accentuated for girls than boys in technical secondary schooling. More than three-fifths of the girls registered in school come from the last two quintiles, while the proportion is 53 percent for boys. Consequently, at technical secondary level, public expenditure clearly benefits girls from non-poor households more, with the situation being a little less unequal for boys. Thus, the overall inequalities noted between the poor and the non-poor reflect the marginalization of girls from poor families.

The main training sectors are: the primary sector focused on agriculture and forestry, the secondary sector with concentration on industry, mechanics, building and joinery, and the tertiary sector preparing students for the social economy, administrative and technical, sciences, health and educational sciences, as well as music and fine arts. The vocational training is also provided by some businesses, ministries, NGOs and local artisans. The pupil-teacher ratio varies by location and field, moving from extremely high to extremely low.

Development of activities in this sector is hampered by insufficient, rundown infrastructure and facilities that are unsuitable for modern education. Further, the teaching staff is ageing and their skills are outdated. The programs on offer do not correspond to the real needs of the job market and there should be closer partnership with the world of work to smoothen the transition of young people leaving technical and vocational institutions into jobs.

The following main problems were identified in the sector: (i) lack of infrastructure, equipment and facilities; (ii) ageing personnel whose skills have not been sufficiently updated; (iii) weak partnership with the world of the work and related sectors; (iv) mismatch between training programs the real needs; (iv) insufficient collaboration between vocational institutions and the user ministries.

2.4.2.1.3. Literacy

Literacy efforts have slowed since 2000, with an upturn in the closure of centers noted as of 2001. Indeed, the number of centers dropped from 850 in 1990 to 250 in 2005, as functional literacy was neglected and structures were left bare.

2.4.2.1.4. Civic and moral education

The majority of the Congolese population is comprised of young people who are unemployed and, for the most part, idle. This has given rise to the emergence of problems such as street children, drug addiction among young people, and juvenile delinquency. This precarious has multiples consequences for society, including a growing insecurity of the population, and a

fall in moral standards. One consequence of armed conflict has been the worsening of the situation of young people who find themselves with no organized structures, particularly for sporting and cultural activities, which causes them to despair and get involved in criminal activities.

Although effectively a part of the curriculum at primary level, much more attention needs to be devoted to civic and moral education (ICEM) in the Congolese education system in view of the deficiencies identified.

The problem in the area of civic and moral education is the absence of a comprehensive policy on civic and moral education.

2.4.2.1.5. Higher education

Higher education includes both public and private higher education. The sector is currently confronted with numerous challenges and difficulties. Inherited mostly from the colonial era, infrastructure—amphitheatres, libraries, laboratories, classrooms, etc.—is generally inadequate and in a state of disrepair. With regard to personnel, more particularly at the Marien Ngouabi university, there is a problem of the ageing and numerical weakness of the teaching staff as well as of the corps of seniors researchers (5.2 percent tenured professors; 8.8 percent *Maîtres de Conférences*; 62.6 percent *Maîtres-Assistants* and 23.4 percent *Assistants*). Funds allocated under the national budget are not enough to allow the university to function normally.

Public higher education is available only in Brazzaville and is concentric at the Marien Ngouabi university. In the first years of the university undergraduate program, there is a high repeat rate as a result of the mediocre standard of the new high school graduates, extreme overcrowding, and the students precarious social situation. Existing degree programs are outdated and do not meet international standards. Already significant in high school, gender disparities are even more pronounced at the higher education level. Generally speaking, three out of four students come from poor areas; these figures are 77 percent for girls and 15 percent for boys, respectively.

Private higher education is at an embryonic stage and is not always consistent with international standards in terms of recruitment of students and teachers or physical and informational infrastructure.

The main higher education problems are: (i) inadequate infrastructure, equipment, and social infrastructure; (ii) shortage of teachers; (iii) inadequate operating budget; (iv) concentration of higher education institutions in Brazzaville; (v) low professional standards of training programs; (vi) gender imbalance in the student population; (vii) absence of the funds allocated to research.

2.4.2.1.6. Scientific research and technological innovation

For more than two decades, Congo has been working to build up its scientific and technical system. Law 15-95 of September 7, 1995, in particular, bears witness to this fact. This Law outlined the guidelines and planned timeframe for scientific and technological development, and elevated the science and technology sector to national priority status, recognizing it as an engine of socio-economic development.

The low levels and poor distribution of allocations and lack of continuity in support for research activities mean that researchers have to work under difficult conditions. These difficulties have been further exacerbated as the recruitment of young researchers has all but

halted leaving teams depleted by retirements and demoralized by the lack of stimulation and fresh ideas.

In almost all research areas, the glaring lack of dynamic and effective scientific cooperation is lamented. The reason for this appears to be not so much institutional or strategic shortcomings but rather the consequence of a break, of around a decade, in the links that the Congolese scientific community had forged with the outside world and which were broken during the period of troubles.

The sector is confronted with the following problems: (i) poor structuring of research at the institutions placed under the responsibility of the General Delegation for Scientific and Technological Research; (ii) non-application of Law 15-95 on research promotion; (iii) unattractiveness of the status of researchers; (iv) degraded, obsolete infrastructure and equipment; (v) an acute shortage of researchers at all levels and ageing personnel; (vi) breakdown of links with the outside world as well as with local enterprises and industries; (vii) disconnect between research and the productive sectors; (viii) absence of military research in public research; (ix) absence of laboratories in State enterprises.

2.4.2.1.7. Culture and arts

Culture and the arts occupy an important place in society. All countries consider men and women of culture and artists of international repute part of their national heritage. However, in Congo, artists are not recognized as contributors to development. There is no conceptualization of culture and the arts as sources of national wealth.

Although enormous potential exists in culture and the arts, one notes the absence of cultural industries and appropriate structures capable of broadening the scope of cultural promotion activities.

Despite the importance of culture and the arts in Congolese society and in the development process, the potential of this area is largely untapped. Some of the difficulties encountered include: (i) absence of a specific policy for culture and the arts; (ii) the non-ratification of some international conventions and texts on the promotion of culture; (iii) the lack of appropriate structures for the preservation and protection of cultural heritage; (iv) inadequate training of the creators of cultural works and works of art and the managers of cultural infrastructure; (v) piracy impoverishing the artistes.

2.4.2.1.8. Sports

The situation of sport in Congo has not improved in almost three decades. There are currently no clear objectives guiding the organization and practice of sports in the country. Without an infrastructure network in all of the departments/arrondissements, districts/villages, companies and schools, it is not feasible to promote and support the practice of a wide range of sports in the various departments.

Weak sports policy is illustrated by the scarcity of modern installations, lack of organized facilities for trainers, inadequate training of sports managers, and sub-standard training structures, which explains the poor showings of athletes and sportspersons in competition.

Although the public authorities' efforts in sport have led to the building of a few installations in Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire, and Dolisie, in the rest of the country there is a general lack of viable, functional infrastructure and where installations do exist, they are old and deteriorated. Inadequate working conditions and standards of control as well as low levels of financing of national and international competitions have all led to the weak representation of Congolese athletes in the final rounds of sporting competitions. Insufficient involvement of

local governments in the development of physical and sporting activities is another reason for the disinterest in sports by the local population.

The sports sector is characterized by: (i) absence of a sound sports policy, (ii) insufficient practice of sports by the population; (iii) weak national coverage in sports facilities and installations particularly at school and university level.

2.4.2.2. Health

The demographic and health indicators for Congo highlight the worrying state of health of the population characterized by high maternal, neonatal, and infant-child mortality and by high levels of morbidity.

Health care and services are provided by operational poles made up of public and private health facilities. In 2005, the country had a total of 1,712 health facilities of all types and status (public, private) (Ministry of Health and Population, National Health Map 2006).

The geographical distribution of these health facilities showed that 49.1 percent were in urban areas, 34.8 percent in rural areas, and 16.1 percent in secondary centers. In general, public health centers and hospitals lack technical supplies and equipment. Around 17.6 percent of public health facilities had to be closed because of the dilapidated condition of their infrastructure, underequipment, and understaffing. Private health facilities make up 50.2 percent of first-line health facilities and are situated mainly in Brazzaville and Pointe Noire. This sector is, however, not well organized or properly regulated.

The rural poor are more disadvantaged than the urban poor. Those who have the means turn to private establishments because of the sometimes unsatisfactory quality of services offered in the public system.

Health personnel

Between 2002 and 2006, the number of health personnel, all categories taken together, increased from 5,130 to 9,491 workers, that is, a 46 percent increase. This improvement brought about by recent recruitments in the public service still falls short of needs. In spite of the sizeable medical staff, there are disparities between urban and rural areas.

Provision of care

The high cost of access to health care pushes people to buy badly stored and uncontrolled drugs from street vendors and markets and to go to quacks or unscrupulous men of religion without any real assurance of being cured. Difficult access to quality care also results in the death of numerous women during childbirth.

Analysis of the causes of morbidity and mortality in the country has shown that limited access to quality health care and services is attributable to the weak performance of the health system which accounts for the precarious state of health of the population. The care and services on offer are limited in scope and of poor quality and there is also a problem of underutilization of the care and services offered by the health facilities.

Supply of drugs

The country's main source of supply of drugs is imports. The market is served by two networks that import medicines, the public network and the private network. The private network, which is larger, includes importers and supply structures attached to NGOs and denominational entities. The public network is constituted by COMEG, which is a non-profit

making association that received a mandate from the government to serve as a central purchasing agency with a focus on generics.

Regarding the quality assurance and control of drugs, the situation is characterized a year ill-adapted administrative organization, judicial base, and material and technological resources. The Congo neither has, nor uses the services of, a quality control laboratory. The WHO certification system is the only mechanism used.

A national pharmaceutical policy was adopted in 2004. Issues related to the selection, import, quality control, distribution, and rational use of drugs are the subject of specific provisions, the implementation of which is to be governed by a master plan to be adopted.

Epidemiology

Epidemiology in Congo is characterized by communicable and non-communicable diseases.

Communicable diseases

In 2006, malaria was the leading cause of morbidity (55 percent of the reasons for consultation). Children under five years old represented 41.6 percent of cases with a fatality rate of 74.3 percent. The second leading reason for consultation in children under five years old was acute respiratory infections. In 2002, such infections represented 29.8 percent of the causes of death. Diarrheic diseases are the third main reason for consultation in health facilities.

Following the 1998-1999 and 2001 epidemics in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, there was a recent cholera epidemic in 2006-2007 with 7,353 cases and 109 deaths. Other diseases that could be mentioned include Ebola viral hemorrhagic fever, measles, and maternal and neonatal tetanus.

Tuberculosis is a major cause of morbidity and mortality in Congo, with close to 10,000 new cases recorded every year, of which around 36 percent are associated with HIV. The so-called neglected diseases (trypanosomiasis, schistosomiasis, Buruli ulcer, and onchocerciasis...) have currently stabilized following prospection campaigns and treatment provided during various outbreaks.

Non-communicable diseases

Arterial hypertension is the leading cardiovascular disease in adults, with a prevalence of 32.5 percent (G. Kimbally Kaky, 2004). The prevalence of diabetes in the general population was 6 percent in 2004. Regarding cancer, 80 to 90 new cases a year on average are recorded at the cancer service of the Brazzaville teaching hospital. The most common cancers are: cervical cancer, female breast cancer, liver cancer, and prostate cancer. In respect of sickle cell anemia, a study carried out in 1986 and 2005 on umbilical cord blood found that 20 percent of newborns were carriers of the sickle cell trait and 1 percent had the disease (one newborn in every 102 births).

Maternal health

The reproductive health situation is characterized by estimated maternal mortality of 781 maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births (EDSC-I, 2005) highlighting the obstetrical risk of pregnancy and maternity. The most affected are young girls or women aged between 20 and 24 years (i.e., 32 percent) as well as adolescent girls under 20 years old (i.e., 25 percent). The main causes of maternal death include, induced abortions (41 percent), hemorrhaging (40 percent), post-abortion infection (18.8 percent), post-partum infection (12.7 percent), arterial hypertension - eclampsia (11 percent), dystocia and their consequences

(womb rupture, vesico-vaginal fistula, ascendant infections), HIV/AIDS (6 percent), malaria, and other (20 percent).

Infant health

In 2005, neonatal mortality was estimated at 33 per thousand, which represents 44 percent of infant mortality. Causes of neonatal mortality include premature birth (33 percent), respiratory distress (28 percent), infections (17 percent), congenital diseases (8 percent), tetanus (4 percent), diarrheic diseases (2 percent), and miscellaneous causes (8 percent). Infant mortality reached 65, 87, and 75 deaths per 1000 live births, in 1995, 2000, and 2005, respectively. Over the same period infant-child mortality figures were 101, 131, and 117 per thousand.

The main causes of death in children under five years old have remained unchanged for several years. They are malaria (31 percent), diarrhea (26 percent) acute respiratory infections (ARI, 14 percent), non-malarial anemia (6 percent), AIDS (7 percent), and other diseases (16 percent).

Infant morbidity and mortality are due essentially to the persistence of infectious and parasitic diseases, malnutrition, and several predisposing socio-economic, geographic, demographic, and individual factors. The inadequate quality of care and the weak performance of health personnel also explain this situation.

Youth health

Young people are exposed to sexually transmissible diseases and HIV/AIDS. Young girls are also exposed to death from induced abortions and childbirth. A knowledge aptitude and practices (KAP) survey conducted in 2003 by the Directorate General for Population (DGPOP) showed that 67.7 percent of young people and adolescents are ignorant on matters of reproductive health care, 65 percent have never frequented such services, and 30.26 percent have recourse to self-medication to treat sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

According to the results of the survey conducted by the National AIDS Council (CNLS) in 2003, HIV/AIDS prevalence rate is 4.2 percent for subjects aged 15 to 49 years, 5.4 percent for persons who never attended school, 4.8 percent for those who reached middle school level, 3 percent high school level, and 2.5 percent for university level. This seroprevalence is estimated at 7.2 percent for the population of 15 to 24 year-olds. It ranges between 5 to 10.5 percent for women and between 2.1 and 4.4 percent for men. The research highlights a correlation between the level of education and the risk of contracting this disease. HIV/AIDS is, thus, the leading cause of mortality in persons aged 15 to 45 years.

With regard to sexuality, young people are vulnerable because of weak utilization of modern methods of contraception (13 percent), birth spacing (13 percent), and the limitation of births (3 percent). The DHS also indicates that 27 percent of young women between 15 and 19 years old are already mothers or pregnant for the first time (i.e., a little over one in four minors aged 15 to 18). These risky health practices (HIV/AIDS, STIs, pregnancies, and abortions) are largely the result of the very early age of first sexual intercourse, (24 percent of 15 to 24 year old women had their first sexual intercourse before age 15), ignorance, low utilization of contraceptive methods, and the context of generalized idleness.

Insufficient knowledge about reproductive health, lack of financial resources, the absence of targeted services and underutilization of existing services results in young people being increasingly exposed to unhealthy behaviors, namely, smoking, abuse of alcohol, drugs, and other hallucinogenic substances, sexual promiscuity, and prostitution.

Nutritional health

The nutritional situation of the Congolese population remains worrying. The demographic and health survey conducted in 2005 shows that 26 percent of children under five years old suffer from chronic malnutrition and 14 percent are underweight, while the average prevalence of low birth weight is 13.3 percent.

Food and nutritional insecurity currently affects one-third of the population, who show signs of chronic malnutrition. Those most affected are low-income households, children, pregnant and nursing women, the victims of conflict, and people infected or affected by HIV/AIDS.

This situation of precariousness manifests itself through problems such as growth retardation (chronic malnutrition) and high micronutrient deficiency levels (iron, Vitamin A, and iodine, etc.) characterized a anemia rates of around 65 percent in children and 57 percent in women, Vitamin A deficiency in five (5) departments of the country, namely Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire, Plateaux, Lékoumou, and Likouala, and the still high prevalence of iodine deficiency in the high-risk departments of Likouala and Sangha—12.1 percent and 17.3 percent, respectively in 2006—while in the Cuvette department the indicators fell noticeably to 7 percent in 2006.

The main problems plaguing the health system are: (i) low managerial capacities at all levels of the system (central, intermediate, peripheral); (ii) lack of information to support management and decision-making in the health system; (iii) inadequate human, technical, material, and financial resources to meet the needs; (iv) poor quality of care and health services; (v) weak availability of essential and generic drugs and other consumables in the health facilities; (vi) insufficient community participation in the management of the health system and of their own health; (vii) weak access of vulnerable groups to health services.

With regard to maternal and infant health, the major problems are: (i) insufficient popular information and awareness about the problems associated with maternal health, for example, women and their families are unfamiliar with warning signs during pregnancy and the measures to be taken, (ii) shortage of structures offering emergency obstetric and neonatal care (EmONC), basic emergency obstetric care (EmOC), and comprehensive emergency obstetric care (CEmOC), (iii) deficiencies in the quality and quantity of qualified personnel, (iv) the prohibitive cost of maternal, neonatal, and infant health care in relation to household purchasing power, (v) shortage of basic supplies and equipment in health facilities, (vi) absence of continuous staff training, (vii) demotivation of staff, (viii) unsatisfactory mother and child health information system.

2.4.2.3. Food security

Food situation

For the majority of the Congolese population, the right to food is not yet guaranteed and achieving national food security remains a major challenge particularly in the light of the 1996 World Food Conference definition, which states that food security is achieved “when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”

In fact, indicators on the poverty profile in Congo show that 50.7 percent of people live on less than one US dollar per day and that 1/3 of the population suffers hunger. According to the Republic of Congo report to the World Food Summit held in June 2002, the number of underfed people stood at 900,000 in 1996, rising to 1,400,000 in 1998-1999 as a consequence of repeated wars. In 2000, the number fell back to around 800,000 people.

Despite the existence of immense cultivable spaces (10 million hectares), abundant natural pasture land, an ocean front and waterways abounding in fish as well as favorable climatic conditions for two rainfed crop cycles a year, the agriculture, livestock, and fisheries sector falls far short of ensuring the food self-sufficiency of the population (except in the case of manioc). The country has, therefore, become a chronic food importer to meet the population's food needs.

Nutritional situation

Malnutrition is very present among the most vulnerable population groups (children, pregnant women, senior citizens, low-income households) and translates into: (i) low birth weight affecting 13.3 percent of newborns; (ii) chronic malnutrition among 26 percent of children; (iii) problems of underweight in 14 percent of children under 5 years old; (iii) iron and folic acid deficiencies in 70 percent of expectant mothers.

The daily energy requirements ensured through national production are below the recommendations of the Joint WHO/FAO Committee for Africa: 2,393 kilocalories, 59 grams of protein, and 9 percent of protein kilocalories compared to 2,400 kilocalories/person/day, a protein ration of 70 grams/person/day, and 12 percent of protein kilocalories, respectively.

The main nutritional problems of Congo are associated with: (i) protein-energy malnutrition coupled with deficiencies in specific nutrients (iron, Vitamin A, iodine, etc); (ii) insufficient availability of food associated with weak local agropastoral and fisheries production, low-income, absence of a culture of conservation, processing and storage of foodstuffs and the seasonality of product supplies; (iii) ignorance of nutritional issues by the population and inappropriate food habits.

2.4.2.4. Water and sanitation

Congo is endowed with significant water resources that have the potential to supply its population with safe drinking water. Despite this, however, the rate of coverage both in urban and rural areas is quite unsatisfactory. Similarly, access to individual or collective sanitation installations in urban and rural areas is below par.

2.4.2.4.1. Water

The rate of access to running water is less than 32 percent for households in the first decile, 51 percent for the fifth decile, and over 70 percent starting from the eighth decile. In addition to the fact that the non-poor have the most access, they also tend to be the largest consumers. The ratio between the average monthly consumption of a household in the last decile and a household in the first decile is one (1) to thirteen (13).

In urban areas, safe drinking water is supplied in 21 centers by the national water distribution company (SNDE), representing a coverage rate in the vicinity of 40 percent. This situation can be explained by the nonexistence of a maintenance plan for the upkeep and/or renewal of essential systems coupled with frequent power cuts. In peri-urban areas, the haphazard occupation of land poses problems for the installation of basic social services infrastructure. Thus, safe drinking water is supplied mainly by the informal sector either via private boreholes or through water sellers in containers or by tank truck.

In rural areas, safe drinking water is supplied either by the government, NGOs, or development partners, with strong involvement of the beneficiary rural communities, through management committees for these water points. The boreholes installed in some localities are not functional. The rate of coverage is around 11 percent. The remaining residents get their water from artisanal wells, rainwater, water courses and natural streams. Women are

responsible for fetching water and this task takes up most of their time, leaving them tired and overworked. Much of the task of collecting water also falls to children who, thus, become exposed to serious dangers (risk of drowning in rivers and falling in wells).

According to ECOM, 10 percent of households take less than one hour to access a safe drinking water source, distances between housing areas and water points vary between 500 and 1,500 m on average. This situation is difficult to accept as this task is carried in general aux children and aux women.

The sector water is faced with the following problems: (i) water supply to the population is out of step with the potential of the country; (ii) inadequate water quality control resources; (iii) insufficient equipment that is very old and rundown; (iv) weak coverage of the urban network and of frequent cuts; (v) not enough water points in rural areas.

2.4.2.4.2. Sanitation

In urban areas, ECOM showed that the coverage rate for adequate individual sanitation (flushing WCs and improved ventilated latrines) is around 10.5 percent. The remaining infrastructure, that is 89.5 percent, comprises non-conventional latrines.

There are no organized dumps for the elimination of the sludge collected, which represents a grave environmental and public health threat.

There are no wastewater sanitation networks for households in communes and departmental capitals. Household waste water is thrown into yards, the street, and the rainwater drainage system.

In addition, water waters full of chemical and organic pollutants from other human institutions (brasseries, hospitals, hotels, etc.) are evacuated into the drains without prior treatment.

All the rainwater evacuation networks in urban and rural agglomerations, where they do exist, are inadequate, extremely old and clogged.

In rural areas, ECOM highlighted that the coverage rate for adequate individual sanitation is around 0.4 percent. The remaining sanitary facilities, that is 81.4 percent, is comprised of non-conventional latrines. Further, over 17 percent of the population defecate directly into the natural surroundings.

The sanitation sector is plagued by the following problems: (i) inadequate, extremely old, and deteriorated facilities and equipment; (ii) shortage of appropriate civil engineering works and services.

2.4.2.5. Housing

The rapid growth of cities (6 percent a year) since the 1970s has not been accompanied by the construction of public infrastructure and facilities to meet the demands of urban development because of the lack of technical and financial capacity of the agencies responsible. This explains the current situation, which is characterized by huge unmet needs for roads and utility services (VRD) over large stretches of urban space, the absence of an efficient housing authority, and inadequate production of decent housing.

Between 1985 and 2004, no social housing programs were implemented, which means that the only social housing programs currently underway were started in late 2004. Self-construction remains the main mode of access to housing. It accounted for the construction of around 218,000 residences, that is, 98 percent of the national housing stock. The need for

housing remains very largely unsatisfied. Estimated at 13,550 units a year for the country's two main urban centers, the effective annual supply is 2,000 units in Brazzaville and Pointe Noire.

The large majority of households currently live in unsanitary and precarious dwellings because of the difficulty accessing affordable housing, with the poor being the most affected. The high cost of land results in people being forced to occupy at risk and peripheral areas creating a significant burden on public community facilities and services.

ECOM data regarding access to housing reveal that close to 59 percent of households own their homes and that the gender disparity among heads of households is insignificant. Overall, the proportion of owner-occupied households is as follows: 75 percent in rural areas, 59 percent in semi-urban areas, 54 percent in Pointe- Noire, 47 percent in other communes, and 43 percent in Brazzaville.

Standard of living, measured both in terms of monetary income and housing indicators is higher in salubrious districts than in slum areas, with, however, a narrower gap in housing conditions. The capital, Brazzaville, is the urban center with the highest percentage of households, 63.6 percent, living in slum areas. In Pointe-Noire, half of all households are in this situation and in the other urban centers 54.2 percent. When one considers the entire urban space, half the households (47.1 percent) in slum areas are in a situation of poverty compared to one-third in districts classified as salubrious.

A look at the poverty rate by city shows that the disparities between salubrious districts and slum areas are particularly acute in the capital and to some extent Pointe Noire, and less accentuated in the other urban centers. In Brazzaville, the incidence of poverty stands at 35.8 percent in salubrious districts and 53 percent in the slums. The corresponding figures for Pointe Noire and the other urban centers are 27.3 percent and 38.4 percent, and 55.8 percent and 60.8 percent, respectively. Housing characteristics (wall, roofing, and flooring materials) are not very different among categories of households, with the notable exception of building materials for walls in the case of which eight [sic] households in salubrious districts use sustainable building materials versus less than two-thirds of households in slum areas. It should be noted, in particular, that in Pointe Noire, the city in which the incidence of poverty is lowest, wood is very often used, close to half of all dwellings. Regarding roofing and flooring, galvanized roofing is widespread in urban areas as is cement for flooring, except in the other urban centers.

This sector has to deal with the following problems: (i) a high rate of urbanization that has led to the excessive and uncontrolled spread of large urban centers; (ii) a housing shortage; (iii) weak financial capacity of the government housing agency; (iv) absence of housing finance mechanisms and institutions; (v) weak local building materials production capacity; (vi) institutional dysfunctionality in the area of urban management; (vii) noncompliance with building standards; (viii) the high cost of building materials; and (ix) weak private sector participation in property development.

2.4.3. Social environment and integration of vulnerable groups

2.4.3.1. Social protection

The weakness of social protection in Congo is illustrated by the scope of application of existing mechanisms which do not cover all vulnerability and fragility risks and only take into account an infinitesimal part of the population, namely workers in the formal sector. Thus, indigent or vulnerable population groups, objectively in need of social protection, are excluded.

The government lacks the necessary technical capacities and commitment to address the vulnerability issues of certain social groups effectively; parents, who are often disadvantaged, have little authority and abandon their responsibilities; while communities are increasingly incapable of meeting the needs of their members, given the difficulties they face in coming up with solutions and mobilizing resources..

The weakness of social coverage is a consequence of the absence of a coherent social security system in the country. Children, young people and socially marginalized groups (the aged, indigenous people, and other minorities) are weakened and excluded and do not benefit from a sufficient level of solidarity to guarantee their right to survival, development, protection, and a dignified and decent life.

Health insurance is nonexistent, the reimbursement of medical expenses is a rarity, available only to people working for private enterprises; the retirement benefits of civil servants are inadequate and the process for accessing them is long and complex. Although civil servants receive their pensions regularly, the same is not as true for those workers who are subject to the labor code. The consequences of ineffective social protection are more keenly felt by the most vulnerable segments of the population, that is, those who are unable to meet their needs using their own initiatives.

The problems identified are as follows: (i) lack of solidarity measures and protection of the fundamental rights of the most vulnerable population groups; (ii) limited scope of application of social protection measures restricted to civil servants and private sector workers; (iii) poor management of social protection structures; (iv) a narrow range of services; (v) absence of health insurance and solidarity provisions for the unemployed and low and no-income persons.

2.4.3.2. Employment and working conditions

In respect of employment, the Congolese economy has experienced irregular growth whose repercussions on the job market in recent decades have led to rising unemployment that has reached worrying proportions.

The unemployment rate almost tripled between 1970 and 2004, up from 11.9 percent to 33.5 percent of the active population⁴. In that lapse of time, the unemployment situation went through two phases.

The first, 1970-1984, saw a rise in unemployment of 12.5 percent a year on average notwithstanding the increase in the number of salaried workers in the modern sector from 54,543 to 149,332⁵.

The second period (1985-2004) is characterized by the emergence of massive unemployment. This period was marked in particular by the public service downsizing (from 7,528 in 1994 and 1,263 civil servants in 1995⁶) and hiring freeze.

ECOM shows that unemployment mostly affects young people aged 15 to 29. According to the survey, the estimated rate of unemployment among young people of 15-29 years old was 33.1 percent and 11.1 percent among people in the 30-49 year age group. It was also shown that unemployment rates for men and women are similar, 18.2 percent for men and 20.5 percent for women. However, in respect of unemployment rural residents are better off than

⁴For the period 1970-1999, the source is UNDP: « Guerres, et après? » (War and afterwards?), National Human Development Report 2002, pg.99. The statistics for the 2000-2004 period come from the General Directorate for Employment and Human Resources.

⁵UNDP : « Guerres, et après? », National Human Development Report, 2002, pg.101.

⁶ UNDP : « Guerres, et après? », National Human Development Report, 2002, pg.42.

those living in cities as the unemployment rate is 5.8 percent in rural areas compared to 32.6 percent in Brazzaville and 31.5 percent in Pointe-Noire. The situation is more worrying for people with disabilities who are excluded from certain sectors of work.

Unemployment became entrenched as a result of the public service recruitment freeze, destruction of the economic fabric during armed conflict, closure of state-owned enterprises and government withdrawal from certain sectors of the economy without accompanying measures as well as insufficient economic diversification.

The employment sector is confronted with the following problems: (i) absence of a national employment policy; (ii) weak public sector job creation capacity; (iii) weak development of private enterprises; (iii) denigration of agropastoral work and arts and crafts; (iv) lack of job skills training mechanisms.

It is worth recalling that the problem of the mismatch between training and potential opportunities for employment has already been dealt with in the sectors dealing with education.

In respect of working conditions, one notes, in particular, the scant regard for regulatory texts governing the organization of work in companies (for example: the requirement for employers to consult with workers' representatives before seeking authorization from the labor inspector to carry out overtime work) as well as the rules governing the firing or retrenchment of workers for reasons of corporate restructuring or reduction of business activities, and rules on the treatment of the so-called protected salaried workers (candidates to the position of staff representative, staff representatives, former staff representatives for a period of six months following the expiration of their term of office, trade union representatives, members of the health and safety committee).

Regarding the framework for consultation between employers and workers, one notes, among other problems, the absence of representation criteria for professional employers' organizations and shortcomings in the establishment of flexible working hours (part time work, compressed work week, flexitime, intermittent work, etc.). Most employment contracts take little account of the regulations in force and some business activities are not covered by the current labor laws. There is also a lack of provisions governing forms of employee participation in corporate profits such as company savings plan, profit-sharing schemes (*intérêt*), and purchase of shares. Further, the inadequacy of legislation governing the activities of private employment agencies should also be noted. In addition, one notes the weak establishment and organization of employers' economic interest groups.

With regard to the monitoring of the workers' health, enterprises address the issue either in isolation or in groups. These types of organizations are not of a sufficient standard to guarantee better protection for workers. The latter face health-related problems as a result of physical, mental, biological, and ergonomic constraints as well as exposure to, or the handling of, toxic products, etc.

Occupational health, which should help reduce on-the-job risks (work-related accidents and occupational diseases), is not organized. Regarding social dialogue, the mushrooming of structures for negotiations between employers, including the government, and their employees is to be deplored as this very often poses a problem of legitimacy of the interlocutors whose representativity is debatable. Hence the emergence of numerous administrative or judicial appeals.

The major problems related to working conditions are as follows: (i) current legislation does not cover some business activities; (ii) poor compliance with the labor code; (iii) ill-defined framework for employer/employee consultations; (iv) weak organization of employers (professional organizations, economic interest groups, etc.); (v) insufficient

attention paid to on-the-job risks and the adaptation of workstations to people with disabilities; (vi) nonexistence of occupational health.

2.4.3.3. Children

The worrying situation of children is evident in the deterioration of health, nutrition, and education indicators in particular (well-being parameters) as highlighted by the DHS findings. Regarding health and nutrition, there is a general deterioration in the situation of children, which could lead to retardation and deficiencies in their intellectual and physical development.

In the area of protection of children, the persistence of numerous social risks and the emergence of new challenges have been observed. These include orphans, street children, abandoned children, child soldiers, children in trouble with the law, child victims of trafficking, abuse, and violence, young single mothers, etc. Initially, marginal, the phenomenon of street children that emerged a few years ago in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire has spread to other cities (Dolisie, Owando, etc.) and is becoming quite worrying. These children find themselves in the most precarious conditions. The problem of trafficking in children was identified within the Beninese community living in the two largest agglomerations, where 1,800 children were found to be victims. In Brazzaville, children are victims of forms of exploitation related to the sale of merchandise or prostitution particularly among young girls from as early as age 12. Young boys face problems of working for unscrupulous employers, malnourishment, and precarious shelter, frequently having to change locations to avoid aggression and theft during the night.

The number of child soldiers that form part of armed groups has been estimated at around 1,500. The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration program put in place has not yet been completed. Many former child soldiers, including girls, do not receive appropriate assistance in the areas of physical and psychological readaptation and reintegration into family and school life.

Children with disabilities still face many discriminatory attitudes and barriers, making it difficult for them to develop their capacities and live a full and satisfactory life. For instance, they are not as fully integrated into schools as they could be. As a result of poor law enforcement, sexual violence (rape, incest, sexual exploitation of young girls, and sexual harassment) persists, is trivialized and goes unpunished. The widespread economic fragility and poverty of families magnifies the problems of exclusion, early sexuality and motherhood, and exploitation of the most vulnerable groups.

According to the DHS, 19 percent of children are not registered. This failure to register births represents a new challenge in protection terms that is particularly acute in the case of “indigenous” minorities and of concern in other social groups despite efforts made to establish civil registries to record births, NGO-supported outreach campaigns, late birth registration campaigns in Pool and Plateaux, and special operations to register children born to indigenous peoples as well as to refugees in Sangha and Likouala.

The main problems encountered are: (i) poor enforcement of regulatory texts governing the rights of children, women, and minorities; (ii) widespread failure to register children at birth (iii) high levels of malnutrition among children in urban and rural areas; (iv) high infant morbidity and mortality rates due to infectious and parasitic diseases; (v) poor conditions of basic education; (vi) early sexuality exposing children to multiple risks; (vii) exploitation of children (work, prostitution, child soldiers, trafficking in children); (viii) insufficient support services for children in difficulty (street children, child soldiers, child victims of trafficking, children in trouble with the law, OVC); and (ix) unsatisfactory systems for the prevention and treatment of children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

2.4.3.4. Special education

Special education concerns people with disabilities (hearing impaired, visually impaired, neo-literate, etc.). This type of education, which is very underdeveloped in Congo and available exclusively in the major cities of Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, is difficult to access for a large number of children. Further, the recently adopted strategic framework for the promotion of school enrolment and re-enrolment of disabled children shows that very little account is taken of this sector in school statistics.

No provisions have been made to encourage the development and implementation of schemes for the integration of children with disabilities into ordinary school or to leverage the literacy services on offer for young people and adults with disabilities. Further, not all the buildings and facilities of special education centers damaged during armed conflict have been rehabilitated.

This sector is confronted with inadequate training structures, specialized facilities and equipment, and lack of appropriate human and financial resources.

2.4.3.5. Youth

The large majority of the Congolese population is made up of children and young people (80 percent), most of whom are in very precarious social situations. This vulnerability is the result of a variety of factors, including the employment crisis, the deterioration of public education and health services, weak social protection, integration, and resettlement mechanisms, and family poverty.

According to ECOM, in the area of employment, young people are the social group most affected by unemployment. Faced with the shortage formal job opportunities, many young people develop survival strategies with no long-term prospects. A number of them have no alternative but to carry out small, badly-paid and uninteresting jobs in the informal sector.

The Ministry of Labor recorded that, in 2003, one in three workers was unemployed. ECOM put the overall unemployment rate at 19 percent and highlighted the particularly worrying situation of young people who had the highest unemployment rates with differences of 10 to 20 points compared to the national average, i.e., 40 percent unemployed in age group 15 to 19, 36.7 percent in age group 20 to 24, and 27.7 percent in age group 25 to 30.

Regarding school enrolment, few young people manage to continue their studies right through middle school, high school, and university. Intake rates at these levels are low: 34.5 percent for middle school and 8.9 percent for high school, in 2004. Thus, only one youngster in every 10 of age to enter high school (14 percent in 2005) actually attends. The gross school enrolment rates in middle school and high school are around 61 percent and 19 percent, resulting in large numbers of young people left unoccupied in family circumstances and social environments (neighborhoods) that are far from nurturing.

Recreational activities

The situation is characterized by the patent absence of facilities for healthy recreational activities such as cinemas, parks, playgrounds, sporting facilities, libraries, venues for creative activities, and organized vacation areas or centers.

The immediate social effect of the shortcomings noted in school enrolment, health, employment, and recreational facilities is a general climate of idleness among youth that is unfortunately a breeding ground for deviant and anti-social behaviors such as, theft,

racketing and swindles of all kinds, sexual harassment, rape, smoking, and drug and alcohol consumption, etc.

Protection, integration, and resettlement mechanisms

Public and private assistance for vulnerable young people is in very short supply. In fact, without jobs, young people very early on encounter the painful experiences of monetary poverty and limited access to basic social services. They have difficulty establishing a home and gaining access to housing as well as acquiring everyday consumer goods and a minimum of conditions necessary for social success.

In addition, worsening family poverty has been observed due to the erosion of purchasing power caused by the cumulative effects of declining civil servants wages and rising prices, which, in fact, increased fivefold over 30 years. To that should be added the low income generated by informal sector activities. Young people, therefore, lack access to the minimum conditions necessary for subsistence in food and health as well as opportunities to satisfy their need for recreational activities.

As far as young people are concerned, the following problems have been identified: (i) high unemployment; (ii) intensification of deviant behaviors (holdups, theft, rape, sexual promiscuity, prostitution, drug abuse); (iii) lack of opportunity to engage in healthy recreational activities; (iv) early sexuality causing dramatic consequences (increase in unwanted pregnancies, numerous induced abortions, numerous abandoned young single mothers, large numbers of abandoned children; (v) high prevalence rate of STIs and HIV/AIDS; (vi) nonexistence of enabling texts pursuant to Law 9-2000 of July 31, 2000 on a youth guidance program; (vii) non-ratification of the African Youth Charter; (viii) absence of a national youth policy.

2.4.3.6. Indigenous peoples and other minorities

In Congo, there are several minority groups characterized by a particular identity that sets them apart from the majority of the population: that is the case of indigenous peoples and albinos.

Indigenous peoples

For a longtime considered second class citizens and left to their own devices, the indigenous peoples constitute the most marginalized and most vulnerable segment of the Congolese population. They are often victims of discrimination and exploitation as cheap labor. Although they live in the forest and on the edges of the bantou villages, they are not involved in the management of forestry and community resources.

Estimated at 300,000 individuals, indigenous peoples represent around 10 percent of the total Congolese population. There are several distinct groups of indigenous people spread across the whole country. They include the Babongos in the Lékoumou, Niari, and Kouilou departments; the Atswa in the Plateaux department; the Aka and the Baaka in the Cuvette-Ouest, Cuvette, and Sangha departments; the Babii in the Pool department, and the Bambenga or Baaka in the Likouala department.

Owing to the destruction of their living surroundings as a result of the continuous and relentless reduction of forested areas spurred by the economic attractiveness of the wood industries, many of them are adopting a sedentary lifestyle and settling in villages or camps situated close to the bantou villages.

Generally speaking, either because of their isolation, or the discrimination they suffer, the majority of indigenous people do not have access to means of transport or communication,

birth certificates, safe drinking water, sanitation, knowledge about hygiene, and social protection. They are mostly unaware of their own rights.

Access to school for children of indigenous peoples is still unsatisfactory. According to the KAP survey carried out in indigenous areas in 2006, more than 65 percent of adolescents do not attend school. The situation is markedly different, however, for indigenous children in the 10 to 13 age group (60 percent among boys and 45 percent among girls).

In the area of health, their access to health care is limited by cultural pressures, the absence of health services in their areas of residence, the discrimination and stigmatization of which they are victims on the part of the bantou population, and lack of financial resources.

Knowledge of STIs/HIV is very weak in indigenous areas (only 33 percent of adolescents have heard about STIs, of which 39 percent of boys and 29 percent of girls). Further, their attachment to certain traditional practices, such as scarification and levirate, makes indigenous peoples particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.

Regarding participation in public life, although various provisions of international texts protect the right of all citizens to take part in the public affairs of their countries, this is also an area in which the indigenous peoples continue to be marginalized. For those who may be eligible to vote, the lack of identification documents bars them from being issued with voter cards and thus ultimately from exercising their voting rights. Indigenous people, therefore, do not have effective enjoyment of their civic and political rights.

Albinos

To date, there are no statistics or studies on the issues related to this minority group. It should, however, be noted that there are many prejudices against albinos and they are victims of stigmatization. Further, they have specific health problems for which no care is provided.

The problems identified with regard to the social protection of indigenous peoples and other minorities are: (i) absence of a social protection policy for minorities; (ii) births of children of indigenous people not recorded in the civil registry; (iii) marginalization; (iv) poor access to basic social services; (v) stigmatization.

2.4.4. HIV/AIDS

Epidemiological and socio-behavioral data on HIV/AIDS situation are drawn from the national seroprevalence survey of November 2003 and from the DHS (2005). According to the 2003 data, HIV epidemic in Congo is a generalized one. The national seroprevalence of HIV is estimated at 4.2 percent with of the disparities between one departmental capital and another reaching 9 percent in some localities.

Analysis of the data on knowledge, attitudes and sexual practices from the DHS produced the following findings:

The age at first sexual intercourse among 20 to 49 year-olds was relatively earlier among women than among men: 15.9 years among women versus 16.7 years among men; the proportion of young people in the 15-24 age group who had sexual intercourse before the age of 15 was 23.4 percent among young women and 26.9 percent among young boys. The proportion climbed to 81.1 percent among young girls and 77.5 percent among young boys before the age of 18.

Only 11 percent of women and 25.4 percent of men aged 15-49 years had full knowledge about AIDS. The number of people aged 15-49 years who knew that HIV could be

transmitted through breastfeeding and that the risk of maternal transmission could be reduced by taking special drugs during pregnancy and child birth was 17.2 percent among women and of 13.6 percent among men.

Attitudes related to the stigmatization of people living with HIV showed that: 47.2 percent of women and 64.69 percent of men aged 15-49 years stated that they would buy fresh vegetables from a trader living with HIV; 55 percent of women and 56.5 percent of men aged 15-49 years thought that a teacher living with HIV should be allowed to continue teaching; 24.0 percent of women and 50.8 percent of men aged 15-49 years thought it unnecessary to be secretive about the status of a family member living with HIV.

The proportion of 18-49 year old adults who thought that young people of 12-14 years old should be taught how to use a condom was 79.0 percent among women and 85.5 percent among men. Proportionally more women thought it is advisable for young men and women to wait until they were married to have sexual intercourse.

The proportion of 15-49 year-olds who said that they had used a condom during their last sexual intercourse with a casual partner (non-marital or non-live in partner) was 21.0 percent among women and 42.8 percent among men. The average number of sexual partners in their lifetime among the age group 15-49 was 4.2 among women and 13.0 among men.

Only 9.5 percent of the women and 10.9 percent of the men aged 15-49 years said that they had been screened for HIV and had received the results. In the 15-49 age group, 4.0 percent of the women and 5.6 percent of the men stated that they had had an STIs over the 12 months preceding the survey, of which 68 percent of the women and 81 percent of the men said that they had sought advice or treatment. In a little more than half of the cases (55 percent), men and women with an STIs went to a health facility or consulted a health professional for treatment or advice.

In general terms the problems encountered in the fight against HIV/AIDS can be summarized as: (i) scarcity of prevention services, (advice, screening, prevention of mother-child transmission, distribution of male and female condoms); (ii) inadequate safety standards for blood transfusions; (iii) weak facilities and capacities for providing medical, psychological, and nutritional care ; (iv) weak availability of ARVs, consumables and reagents; (v) inadequacy of the monitoring, evaluation and epidemiological surveillance system; (vi) insufficient consultation among stakeholders in the fight against HIV/AIDS; (vii) persistence of discrimination and stigmatization of people living with HIV/AIDS.

More specifically, certain social categories are particularly exposed. They are: (i) women and girls; (ii) sex workers; (iii) public forces personnel; (iv) workers in the forestry sector; (v) fishermen; (vi) personnel on the various modes of transport; (vii) teachers, pupils, students, and education personnel and partners; (viii) health personnel; (ix) children and young people; (x) indigenous peoples and other minorities; (xi) penitentiary inmates.

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By way of a summary of this Chapter 2 on the sectoral and thematic diagnosis, it could be stated that in the early 1990s, after three decades of a one-party regime, characterized by planned management of the economy, the Republic of Congo opted for multi-party democracy and found itself grappling with both a difficult economic and financial situation and recurring armed conflict. This generalized socio-political and economic crisis caused a great deal of damage and seriously undermined the socio-economic development of the country.

The findings of surveys conducted in 2005 showed that over half of the Congolese population lives below the poverty line. Income inequalities are significant in so far as the difference in consumption expenditure between the poorest and the richest is 5 to 7 times in

all areas of residence. From the multidimensional standpoint, analysis focused on monetary poverty, education, nutrition, health, employment, water and sanitation, housing, and remoteness. Analysis of the whole population showed significant poverty levels in three dimensions, namely water and sanitation (67.5), health (60.2), and housing (58.7).

Regarding perception, 62.2 percent of the Congolese people consider themselves poor although they do not consider Congo a poor country. It was also noted that both in respect of material goods and interpersonal relations, poverty has several dimensions. It may be monetary, food-related, or involve difficulty in accessing basic social services. It may also be social and cultural. Close to half of all households (49.3 percent) also believe that poverty is synonymous with “poor management of public goods”. This was mentioned by 58 percent of the people belonging to the richest segment of the population, versus 42 percent in the poorest segment. It is in these various manifestations that poverty is perceived by the population as a whole. Through the participatory consultations twenty-two (22) problems were identified, of which fifteen (15) were retained for the national workshop and broken downs into eight (8) general problems, four (4) cross-cutting problems, and three (3) specific problems.

The need to identify the causes of these various problems led to further exploration through poverty diagnosis by sector. The sectors covered were governance, growth sectors (agriculture, forestry, oil, mining, industry, energy, transport, posts, telecommunications, and information and communication technologies, tourism, trade, private sector, microfinance, and sub-regional integration), social sectors (education, health, food security, water and sanitation, literacy, technical and vocational training, higher education, scientific research, and technological innovation), and lastly sectors related to the social environment and the integration of vulnerable groups (social protection, children, youth, indigenous people, employment and working conditions, housing, special education, culture and art, sports, and the environment).

The diagnostic analysis pointed to the following main constraints: (i) weak governance and persistence of pockets of insecurity; (ii) fewer job opportunities and worsening unemployment, particularly in urban areas; (iii) income inequality; (iv) lower purchasing power; (v) unstable economic growth; (vi) inadequate access to basic infrastructure and social services; (vii) environmental degradation; (viii) persistence of communicable and non-communicable diseases; (ix) emergence of new diseases (Ebola viral hemorrhagic fever, Monkey pox, Buruli ulcer); and (x) high prevalence of HIV/AIDS.

Chapter III: Strategic Pillars of Poverty Reduction

The government of Congo is determined to rise to the challenges and attenuate the level of poverty of its population. In that context, the central focus of the development vision underpinning its growth and poverty reduction strategy is the achievement of the MDGs. The vision finds its concrete expression in this Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

This vision is centered around good governance and the consolidation of peace with a view to stimulating national development based on a competitive, diversified economy with strong growth conducive to bringing about a sustainable improvement in the living conditions of the population as a whole and, in particular, the poorest.

The objective is to create the necessary conditions for harmonious economic, social, and cultural development aimed at achieving sustainable human development.

In particular:

- Achieve economic growth of at least 6.5 percent over the period 2005-2015;
- Reduce the monetary poverty rate from 50.7 percent in 2005 to 46 percent in 2008, 41 percent in 2011, and 35 percent in 2015;
- Eliminate extreme poverty and hunger by halving the number of Congolese people living below the poverty line and suffering from hunger by 2015;
- Achieve primary education for all, by ensuring that all children have the possibility of completing a full course of primary schooling by 2015;
- Promote gender equality and empower women by eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education and, if possible, at all levels of education by 2015;
- Reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate of newborns and the under-five mortality rate by 2015;
- Improve maternal health by reducing maternal mortality by three-quarters by 2015;
- Combat and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, control malaria and other major diseases and reverse their trend by 2015;
- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and reverse the loss of environmental resources by 2015;
- Ensure a sustainable environment and halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water;
- Reduce Congo's debt;
- Promote regional and sub-regional integration;
- Develop a partnership for the development of information and communication technologies and the implementation of policies and strategies conducive to helping young people find decent and productive work by 2015.

To achieve these objectives, the Poverty Reduction Strategy is built on the following five (5) pillars:

Pillar 1: Improvement of governance and consolidation of peace and security;

Pillar 2: Promotion of economic growth and macroeconomic stability;

Pillar 3: Improvement of access of the population to basic social services;

Pillar 4: Social environment and integration of vulnerable groups;

Pillar 5: Strengthening the fight against HIV/AIDS.

3.1 Pillar 1: Improvement of governance and consolidation of peace and security

Given the urgent need to establish a climate of good governance, the government intends to develop and implement a program whose objective is to equip Congo with better functioning institutions and relevant sectoral policies in the interest of sustainable development. The

program reflects the substance of this pillar and is centered around the following five (5) components: political governance, peace and security, administrative and judicial governance and the economic, financial, and environmental governance.

3.1.1. Political governance

The government intends to put in place a democratic framework that would facilitate the establishment of the rule of law, sound economic policy, efficient institutions, an impartial justice system, and strengthening of peace and security.

The overall objective is to promote good political practices, individual and collective freedoms, and media independence.

The following strategies have been decided upon to achieve that objective:

(i) *building the supervisory capacity of constitutional institutions.* This will be operationalized through the organization of training activities for the control and evaluation administrations, which will also receive technical, material, and financial support. Similarly, the Parliament will be empowered, through appropriate training activities, to conduct more systematic control of government action.

(ii) *strengthening the culture of democracy and peace.* Sensitization campaigns will be organized on civic, economic, social, and political rights and on the role of parliamentarians. Communication kits on civic rights and the culture of democracy will be produced. Efforts will be made to create modules for school programs to raise awareness on governance issues.

(iii) *improvement of the governance of political parties and associations.* The government would need to finalize the legal framework governing the activities of political parties and afford them technical and financial support. The same applies to associations, which would also benefit from training to enhance their professionalism.

(iv) *introduction of a policy on quotas of women for all appointments and elections.* The idea behind this is to implement a policy requiring a certain quota of women in political, administrative, and elective positions.

(v) *guarantee the freedom and independence of the media.* The media will not be able to play their role effectively without certain technical and financial facilities from the government as well as professional media training programs. The necessary conditions for application of the texts on freedom of the press and communications would need to be created.

3.1.1.1. Decentralization

The objective of decentralization is to promote local development through the simultaneous transfer of competences and resources (human, material, and financial) to elected local authorities.

To accelerate the decentralization process, the following strategies will be implemented:

(i) *establishment of mechanisms aimed at finalizing the legal framework and building the capacity of stakeholders.* The government will enact enabling texts and ensure their dissemination through the hosting of events on the theme of decentralization. Training seminars will be held for local elected representatives and personnel of the deconcentrated and decentralized administrations. The government will seek to promote participatory democracy.

(ii) *development of mechanisms to facilitate citizen participation in the management of local affairs and the establishment of the territorial public service.* The government shall continue and complete the preparation and adoption of texts governing the recruitment and career streams of territorial civil servants. It shall also put in place the relevant organs and organize the recruitment or redeployment of staff to the territorial public service. It shall also promote the local community management structures;

(iii) *implementation of local government mechanisms and fiscal and tax reforms.* The public authorities shall prepare, adopt, and disseminate texts related to the standards for presentation of budget and accounting documents by local governments, as well as the procedures for collection, distribution, and notification of local government revenue. They shall also provide training for the officers of the deconcentrated and decentralized administrations. They shall guarantee the increase and continuity of the overall investment allocation.

3.1.1.2 Departmental and local development

The government's overall objective is to unify the territory by promoting balanced development. Fulfillment of this objective will require implementation of the following strategies at the departmental and local level:

(i) *infrastructure development.* The government will develop a network of departmental and local access roads to provide intra and inter-departmental linkages. The government and local authority shall be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of roads, rivers, and farm feeder roads. The government shall proceed with the electrification of departmental and local communities as well as the promotion of the use of renewable energy sources in rural areas. The local authority shall set up a local radio station.

(ii) *departmental and local economic restructuring through:*

- the promotion of local economic sectors: The local authorities shall be responsible for the promotion of activities related to the agriculture, agroforestry, fisheries, livestock, agro-industrial processing, water resources, and tourism sectors;
- the organization of economic support sectors: The local authorities shall create the conditions for the installation of public and private services necessary for the proper functioning of the local economy, in particular with regard to training and technical and financial support and shall strive to improve commercial networks to guarantee outlets for local production and regular supplies for the general population and business community;

(iii) *the structuring of urban development and housing in the departments.*

This will involve:

- preparing and implementing of town planning documents for urban and rural communities (master plans and local land-use plans) and of the departmental housing program: The local authority shall be responsible for authorizations for land-use occupation. It shall oversee the works for the preparation of lots in the urban and rural communities;
- promoting balanced departmental and local development: The central administration and local governments shall rely on the local urban centers to serve the decentralized areas with a view to improving access of the population to basic services and fostering the development of the economic fabric. The redistribution of basic services, in each department, shall take account of the hierarchical levels of the local urban grid. The health map, school map, and support services for economic activities will be deployed in such a way as to ensure that the host localities are clearly identified

along with the purpose they serve. In this regard, the departmental and communal capitals are the main link and will be assigned the broadest functions. The districts, urban communities, rural communities, and villages shall provide different levels of support for local development;

- promoting property development activity: The local authority shall oversee the construction of the administrative and social housing. It shall put in place mechanisms for the protection and rehabilitation of the land area and public government buildings; revitalization of village networks. The local authority shall oversee the implementation of programs to equip and regenerate local economies with the support of all interested partners.

(iv) *institutionalization of departmental level consultations.* Local stakeholder groups shall be formed and departmental land-use planning and development committees shall be set up: (i) Departmental Poverty Reduction Committees (CDLP); (ii) Local Poverty Reduction Committees; (iii) Departmental Land-Use Planning and Development Committees (CDAT). The government and local authorities shall conclude government/department program contracts.

(v) *preservation of the environment.* The local authorities shall organize pest control activities, combat pollution and bush fires, protect the ecosystems, and take steps to prevent soil erosion, landslides, and floods. They shall also create departmental protected sites and parks.

3.1.1.3 Gender

In December 2007, the Republic of Congo started preparing a national gender policy as a reflection of its commitment to mainstream gender considerations in all of the country's economic and social development actions. The policy also mentions laws intended to protect and improve the living conditions of young girls and women.

The overall objective is to reduce gender inequalities through the economic, social, cultural, and political empowerment of women.

The following strategies have been retained:

(i) *preparation and implementation of a national gender policy.* A review will be conducted of discriminatory laws and new laws are to be adopted and actively promoted. The process of reducing male/female inequalities will be boosted by the preparation, adoption and implementation of a gender policy as well as by the integration of gender sensitivity into all ministerial policies, programs, projects, and budgets.

(ii) *promotion of gender parity in education and of improvements in maternal health.* Outreach activities will be carried out and efforts made to ensure that appropriate measures are taken and effectively implemented in the areas of education and health.

(iii) *promotion of equitable representation and effective participation of women, men, girls, and boys in decision-making at all levels.* The aim is to raise awareness and increase enforcement of legal and judicial texts.

(iv) *combating all forms of violence against women.* The aim here is to build awareness and strictly enforce compliance with the provisions of the penal code sanctioning the perpetrators of violence as well as ensure the proper functioning of structures that provide care for victims.

(v) *promotion of women's rights*. Efforts to promote awareness of women's rights will converge in an information, education, and communication program on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and on existing legal texts. Women's centers and the research, information, and documentation center for women will be revitalized to support capacity building efforts for women.

(vi) *enhancement of the economic empowerment of women*. Job skills training will be offered to women and young single mothers. Support will also be provided for income-generating activities (IGAs) and women's entrepreneurship (*caisses féminines*, training centers).

3.1.1.4. Environment

The overall objective is to safeguard environmental sustainability by ensuring the preservation of natural heritage, protection of ecosystems, and rational use of biodiversity resources.

The following strategies have been identified to achieve these objectives:

(i) *capacity building of stakeholders on environmental issues*. This will involve the organization of information, education, and communication campaigns on the environment. Institutional, legal, and human capacity building, as well as integration of environmental studies into the formal school curriculum will be given due consideration. With regard to the institutional framework, a national Environmental Protection Agency is to be set up as well as a national Sustainable Development Committee, and a Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Center. Efforts will also be made to mainstream environmental considerations into all development projects.

(ii) *air, water, and soil quality control*. An air, water, and soil quality control laboratory will be set up and equipped with instruments for both direct measurements of pollution indicators and indirect measurements by taking samples using collection devices. Regulations will also be introduced to control noise, odor, and vibration pollution as well as exposure to ionizing radiation.

(iii) *preparation and updating of urban and biomedical waste management plans*. Circuits are to be developed for the collection, removal, treatment, storage, elimination, and recycling of household refuse and industrial waste. Measures will need to be taken to ensure that all of these operations are entrusted to structures with proven capacity in municipal and biomedical waste management. A system of public bins will be put in place, appropriate transport vehicles will be recommended, and approved disposal sites will be built. Further, regulation will be introduced on the import of non-biodegradable packaging.

(iv) *an early warning system is to be put in place for major and minor disasters (hydrocarbon pollution, erosion, floods, drought, proliferation of locusts, etc.)*. Plans consistent with the Hyogo Framework for Action will need to be developed. Other appropriate means will also need to be put in place for providing information in case of disaster so as to facilitate rapid response. The population would need to be sensitized and prepared to respond appropriately to disaster risks. Sensitivity maps would also need to be drawn up. The national emergency intervention plan in case of hydrocarbon pollution should be implemented. Regarding erosion in coastal and urban areas, a special works program could be carried out involving regular monitoring of the coast line and the protection of fragile areas subject to unregulated occupation.

(v) *putting in place of a scientific watch on the voluntary or accidental introduction of invasive plants and animals*. Research would need to be strengthened to control all introductions of plants and animals, whose multiplication could pose a threat to local plant and animal species. Regarding plant species (water hyacinth, water lettuce, and water fern) that threaten

the reproduction of fish and clog navigation waterways, studies would need to be conducted to identify biological or mechanical means of eradicating them.

(vi) putting in place of a noise pollution policy. This will entail the implementation of a policy to manage noise-related problems. A campaign will be launched to promote a national plan to combat noise pollution, which said plan would include: (i) noise exposure mapping; (ii) putting in place of noise measurement stations; (iii) development of noise nuisance assessment tools; (iv) preparation of a code of good conduct for those responsible for sources of noise; (v) preparation of a law on controlling noise nuisances; (vi) adoption of a measure making it mandatory to soundproof places of worship; (vii) introduction of a noise tax in line with the polluter-pays principle; (viii) establishment of a high authority responsible for noise control; (ix) promotion of research on noise.

3.1.2. Peace and security

The overall objective is to consolidate peace and security through good governance and a culture of peace, and to guarantee the free movement of people and goods.

To achieve this objective, the following strategies have been identified:

(i) strengthen security to prevent conflict and build lasting peace. Reform of the defense and security system will be pursued with the putting in place of mechanisms making it possible for all citizens to be protected against insecurity, abuse of authority, and the disorderly conduct of some armed operatives. In addition, the government plans to strengthen territorial coverage through the rational location of police stations and the establishment of territorial gendarmerie units coupled with citizen involvement in neighborhood security management. The public forces will receive training in democratic principles, respect for human rights, and migration regulations.

(ii) build the capacity of the public forces and improve the condition of the military. The process of adoption of a law on military programming will be launched with a view to improving the regulatory texts and the capacities and integrity of the public forces through training. Administrative structures and barracks will also be rehabilitated or built. In addition, the military will be provided with equipment, intervention material and other border control resources.

(iii) intensify the fight against drug trafficking and abuse. In addition to strengthening the existing legal framework and border control resources, sensitization campaigns will be carried out to raise awareness on drug consumption and abuse and care will be provided for drug addicts.

(iv) pursue and complete implementation of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration program for ex-combatants. The demobilization of ex-combatants will continue concomitantly with economic and social reintegration efforts. For child soldiers, or war-wounded ex-combatants, efforts will be made to support their development and reintegration into society. In order to obtain successful disarmament, there will be a need to prevent the remobilization of self-demobilized ex-combatants as well as to disarm those illegally in possession of war weapons. Regarding women affected by armed conflict, efforts will be made to identify them and to prepare a support program aimed at addressing their psychological, medical, and economic needs.

(v) complete the process of securing Pool. Efforts will be made to implement the peace agreements and finalize the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration program for militia that are still active.

(vi) *take measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women.* Such measures will focus on enforcing the provisions of the penal code sanctioning the perpetrators of violence, strengthening centers that cater to the medical, health, and psycho-social needs of women who are victims of violence, and supporting their socio-economic reintegration.

(vii) *strengthen the fight against HIV/AIDS in the general population and, more particularly, among members of the public forces.* A comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention and care program will be developed for those infected and affected.

3.1.3. Administrative and judicial governance

In the context of administrative and judicial governance, the overall objective is to improve the performance of public institutions to guarantee the rule of law and good quality public services.

The following strategies have been identified:

(i) *continuation and completion of the public service reform.* A reform of the legislative and regulatory apparatus, in particular, a review of Law 021/89 of November 14, 1989, revising the general public service regulations. The related enabling texts, specific regulations for sections of the public service, texts governing public service institutions and texts of a general scope, would also need to be prepared. To ensure the coherence of the government reform process, a national commission on government reform will be put in place. Rationalization of the public administrations will be achieved through operational capacity building activities and the putting in place of a single, public service/payroll/public forces master file. Similarly, a capacity building exercise and restructuring of the government reform general management will be conducted to give it a multicultural dimension.

(ii) *legal and judicial reform, including a procedural reform.* A reform of the legal and judicial framework will be carried out and the commercial code harmonized with the OHADA treaty. The capacities of the OHADA commission and the commercial courts will be strengthened.

(iii) *promotion of knowledge of legal procedures and texts.* To help men and women to be aware of, understand, and correctly interpret legal texts, law clinics will be set up and/or strengthened. In addition, national legislation and international conventions will be translated into vernacular languages and IEC/CBC activities and training seminars will be organized for judges and the society at large on human rights and women's rights, in particular.

(iv) *build human capacity and strengthen administrative and penitentiary infrastructure.* This will involve the organization of seminars and training workshops for civil servants and regular refresher and emulation courses for civil servants. Courts, tribunals, and prisons in the various departments will be rehabilitated, built and equipped to bring justice closer to the people. Centers for minors will also be set up.

(v) *strengthen the national statistical system.* This will involve the recruitment and training of staff and managers of the national statistical system and the CNSEE as well as the acquisition of the necessary IT and logistical equipment. Adequate financial resources will be allocated to facilitate the conduct of surveys and the dissemination of statistical data. The CNSEE would need to play its role of coordinator of the sectoral statistics systems.

Transparency, corruption and fraud

The overall objective is to reduce corruption and fraud.

The strategies retained in the area of transparency, corruption, and fraud are:

(i) *strengthening transparency in the management of public affairs.* The government will publish information on the management of public affairs, strengthen the technical capacities of government officers and, in the case of public procurement, strive to use tendering procedures systematically.

(ii) *strengthening surveillance and control mechanisms and penalties.* The government shall ensure the financing and build the operational capacities of control institutions and agencies. Accountability and controls in public administration services will become systematic. To that end, the process of putting in place the committee on combating corruption, embezzlement, and fraud, and the anti-corruption observatory would need to be stepped up. Studies would also need to be conducted on the determinants of corruption and fraud, and the rules of good conduct disseminated among civil servants and the general public, with provisions for monitoring their application.

(iii) *raising the level of remuneration of government employees.* The government shall review the value of the wage index and gradually unblock payments for promotions and reclassifications. Staff motivation incentives will also be put in place.

3.1.4. Economic and financial governance

The overall objective is to improve the macroeconomic framework of the country in a sustainable manner.

The strategy to be implemented to achieve this objective centers around the following points:

(i) *capacity building in the preparation of development policies and strategies and the management of reforms.* There is a need to train and provide technical support for national expertise in the design, preparation, execution, monitoring, control, and evaluation of development strategies and policies. Methods and procedures for the analysis and selection of public investments as well as procedures and tools for monitoring these investments will be put in place. A project research and preparation fund will be created. Sectoral strategies, for the priority sectors, in particular, will also be devised.

(ii) *fiscal reform.* The aim is to broaden the tax base by taxing products and services not currently subject to taxation and by developing indirect taxation. This reform will encompass rationalization of the revenue collection agencies and public accounting procedures as well as the institutional framework for the revenue collection agencies. Methods to combat corruption and tax and customs fraud will be introduced and rigorously enforced. Budget execution management and follow up mechanisms will also be rationalized. Adequate public resources will be allocated on the basis of selected priority expenditures conducive to furthering human development.

(iii) *improvement in public procurement management.* This will consist in the reform of public procurement regulations, the drafting of procedures manuals and specifications, and operationalizing the committee on government works and services contracts.

(iv) *strengthening control mechanisms and promoting accountability.* Training sessions will be organized on the budget process, capacity building support to enhance their operational capacities will be provided to civil society organizations (CSOs), associative activities will be promoted, and regulation introduced to strengthen the independence of the media and increase their material and financial resources. So as to ensure the separation of powers, the necessary resources will be made available to the Parliament, the Court of Auditors and Budgetary Discipline, and the justice system to enable them to exercise their control functions and meet their operating expenses.

(v) *improve debt management*. Congo is planning to negotiate debt relief with its preferred creditors to create the conditions for reaching the completion point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. A moratorium (payment freeze) will be negotiated with the Paris Club creditors on debt payments due, possibilities of relief on debt servicing will be explored, and final domestic debt audits conducted. The government intends to guarantee regular monitoring of floating public debt and explore modalities for its clearance.

3.2. Pillar 2: Promotion of growth and macroeconomic stability

Growth is the determining factor of poverty reduction and the sectoral composition of growth determines the extent to which the poorest segments of the population enjoy the benefits of growth. Further, although it is a necessary condition, growth alone is not enough to achieve poverty reduction.

Congo's monetary policy is conducted by the Bank of Central African States (BEAC) which is independent of its member countries. Fiscal policy is the macroeconomic policy instrument that falls entirely under the control of the government. Given the growing importance of oil in macroeconomic accounts, the limited volume of fields, and price volatility, taxation remains the main instrument for transforming petroleum resources into financial, physical, and human capital with a view to ensuring sustainable and equitable growth and avoiding the pitfalls of a pro-cyclical expenditure policy that does not take account of the risks of a reversal of the trend and exhaustion of oil reserves.

Given the volatility of oil prices, the foreseeable decline in production and the eventual exhaustion of oil reserves, for optimal allocation of resources a part of the petroleum windfall must be saved for future generations. Constitution of such a reserve fund hinges first and foremost on political will and a firm commitment on the part of the authorities at all levels. The preparation of sectoral frameworks and a comprehensive Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) should facilitate the efficient management of these resources.

However, the thorny issue of intergenerational transfer of resources cannot be divorced from the vital need to acquire physical and human capital with a view to strengthening the factors of production needed for successful diversification into non-oil activities.

3.2.1 Growth sectors

Socio-economic development is linked among other things to the exploitation and promotion of natural resources. The growth sectors analyzed cover oil, forestry, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, the environment, mining, tourism, and industry.

3.2.1.1 Oil

The objective is to improve the management of the petroleum sector for optimal utilization of oil revenues to develop other sectors.

To that end, the following strategies have been identified:

(i) *optimal use of the share of crude managed by the government*. A mechanism for the management of petroleum resources needs to be put in place and all the oil sector audits need to be completed, while implementing the recommendations of the sector audits already completed. The program with the Bretton Woods Institutions will be continued, while adopting the enabling decrees of the Hydrocarbons Code. Further, efforts will be made to use oil revenue to boost certain productive sectors.

(ii) *improve the control of production and exports*. This will entail the acquisition of high-performance remote detection and remote measurement systems to facilitate surveillance of the maritime sector and inspect the content of ships and shipments.

(iii) *strengthen the judicial framework and institutional capacities as well as national expertise*. A regulatory framework and implementation procedures aimed at strengthening existing control mechanisms, including those related to surveillance, record keeping, data management, and procedures related to information flow will be established, in particular for the management of the Djéno terminal. Efforts will also be made to strengthen taxation of the oil sector.

To enhance institutional capacities, a medium-term training program will be prepared on the basis of contractual training budgets as well as an operational capacity-building program for the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons and the Hydrocarbons Unit of the Ministry of Economy, Finance and the Budget. A policy aimed at strengthening national expertise will also be put in place along the lines of the one for training civil society actors and the media.

(iv) *improve the governance of petroleum resources and the transparency of their management*. The government will operationalize the institutional framework of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI).

(v) *promote outsourcing and strengthening of local technical expertise*. There is a need to prepare the enabling texts of the law on outsourcing and improve the capacities of operators in the sector through appropriate training.

(vi) *depollution and treatment of waste pollutants by the oil companies*. The idea is to adopt regulatory texts in line with international regulations on pollution ratified by Congo obliging the oil companies that produce waste pollutants to take steps to depollute contaminated areas and ensure that production waste is properly treated.

(vii) *ensure petroleum products supplies to the population throughout the national territory*. Steps will be taken to guarantee regular and adequate supplies of petroleum products across the country.

(viii) *increase refining capacities*: CORAF will be modernized and government fuel subsidies gradually reduced.

3.2.1.2. Forestry

The main objective is to develop the sector through improved management of resources and greater local processing.

The strategies retained for the sector are:

(i) *involvement of the population in the sustainable and rational management of forestry and fauna resources*. This will consist in developing and implementing co-management mechanisms for forestry and fauna resources and in preparing and implementing a system for the collection of forestry taxes and transfer of a share of them to local populations.

(ii) *improvement of the management of forestry resources*. Provide support for the development of mechanisms for certification and modalities for control of forestry concessions, implement the priority actions of the national convergence plan within the framework of a Forest and Environment Sectoral Program (FESP), encourage the certification of forest revenue collected by the Treasury, update and enhance the skills of existing personnel, implement the national forest inventory program, prepare, adopt and execute management plans in all forestry concessions and devise forest management

criteria and indicators, put in place strategic tools, such as zoning of government-owned forest areas, forestry map, and land occupation map. A structure for the management of national protected areas will be put in place and efforts will also be made to develop ecotourism activities in the protected areas and to combat deforestation.

(iii) enforcement of regulatory texts governing the forest. Enforcement of regulatory texts will require genuine political will on the part of the public authorities to implement the provisions of the new forestry code, particularly regarding the putting in place of a process of forest management and strict compliance with the international conventions ratified by the country.

(iv) combating the fraudulent exploitation and illegal trade of forestry and fauna products. Remote detection techniques and geographic information systems would need to be strengthened to support forestry law enforcement, the process of putting in place paramilitary corps would need to be speeded up, and the anti-poaching surveillance units (USLAB) extended along with the recruitment and training of ecoguards.

(v) the use, processing, marketing, and promotion of forestry products. A master plan for the industrialization of the wood industry will be prepared and a study conducted on wood processing. The participation of nationals in the processing and marketing of wood will be facilitated. Measures will be taken aimed at facilitating growth, diversification, processing, and promotion of consumption of Congolese wood products.

3.2.1.3. Agriculture, livestock, and fisheries

The overall objective in the area of agriculture, livestock, and fisheries is to increase agropastoral, fish farming, and fisheries productions in a sustainable way so as to reduce the dependence and ensure food security.

The strategies envisaged in the area of agriculture are:

(i) establishment of an agriculture policy. A comprehensive agriculture policy will be prepared and implemented. Ongoing programs will also be pursued and bi- and multilateral partnerships in the area of agriculture strengthened through new programs in the sector.

(ii) creation of favorable conditions for production. This will be done in various ways, including through production support measures such as agricultural mechanization and extension work on improved seeds. Agricultural financing structures and microcredits will also be promoted. Support will be provided to agronomic research centers and, in line departmental specificities, farm feeder roads and technical and vocational schools will be built and/or rehabilitated. In addition, structures responsible for statistical data collection will be revitalized, an agricultural development support fund will be created, and cooperation with bi- and multilateral partners intensified.

(iii) creation of favorable conditions for processing and marketing. To improve the marketing of agricultural products, storage and conservation facilities as well as local and departmental markets will be built. Treatment, conservation, and processing techniques will also be the subject of extension work with farmers

(iv) control of imports and local handling of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). A surveillance system will be set up for imports and genetic manipulation of plants and animals. The aim is to put organic products on the market to guarantee food safety (public health and the quality of foodstuffs). User outreach will be carried out to promote cultivars that are less dependent on pesticides.

The strategies envisaged in the area of livestock are:

(i) *putting in place a livestock policy.* A livestock policy is to be prepared and implemented. Ongoing programs will also be pursued and bi- and multilateral partnerships in the area of livestock strengthened through the launch of new programs to further the development of the sector.

(ii) *creation of favorable conditions for the production of livestock products.* To increase production, efforts will be focused on supplying producers in the sector with high-performance genetic equipment, developing the practice of sharecropping, and cattle feed production. Increased assistance to technical support centers and the health coverage of herds will be promoted. Support will also be provided to boost pastoral research and establish technical schools. Statistical data collection facilities will be revitalized.

(iii) *the creation of favorable conditions for the processing and marketing of livestock products.* To improve the marketing of livestock products, abattoirs and storage facilities as well as local and departmental markets will be built. Treatment and conservation techniques will be developed. Steps will also be taken to create the conditions conducive to the development of a genuine livestock product processing industry.

(iv) *human and institutional capacity building.* This will be achieved through training and skills enhancement of senior managers and by improving the working conditions of field agents.

The strategies to be implemented in the area of fisheries:

(i) *putting in place of a fisheries policy.* A fisheries policy will be prepared and implemented. Ongoing programs will also be pursued and bi- and multilateral partnerships in the area of fisheries strengthened.

(ii) *development and promotion of sustainable aquaculture production.* Maritime and continental fisheries and aquaculture selection will be encouraged to support the regeneration of fisheries resources and reduce the depletion of species. A policy will be conducted with the aim of boosting fisheries and aquaculture production through the monitoring and evaluation of resources, surveillance and protection of the exclusive economic zone and continental waters, raising awareness on issues related to resource management, environmental preservation, and management of fishing grounds.

(iii) *promotion of fish and aquaculture production activities.* Assistance will be provided to maritime and continental aquaculture and fishing communities. Partnerships with non-state actors in the sector will be initiated or strengthened and capacity building activities will be implemented to boost the managerial and operational capacities of fisheries and aquaculture administration agencies and stakeholders.

(iv) *promotion of processing and marketing structures for fisheries and aquaculture products.* Incentives will be put in place to encourage the creation of basic infrastructure in the sector as well as measures to support the marketing of fisheries and aquaculture products. A national quality assurance system for fisheries and aquaculture products will also be put in place.

(v) *development of expertise.* Experimentation of fisheries, aquaculture, conservation, and processing techniques will be encouraged. Training, research, and development will also be promoted. In addition, structures will be put in place for the collection and analysis of statistics.

(vi) *strengthening the legal and institutional framework.* The *legal* framework will be made more attractive and appropriate by enacting enabling texts for the law on maritime fisheries and the laws and regulations on continental fisheries and aquaculture.

3.2.1.4 Mining

The overall objective is to promote mining activities.

The following strategies have been identified in the sector:

(i) *strengthening the existing legal framework*. The enabling texts of the mining code will be adopted and the mining sector master plan prepared and implemented.

(ii) *human and material capacity building of the sector*. This will entail strengthening the operational capacities of the mining administration, training technical professionals and developing public-private partnerships.

(iii) *coordination of the development of artisanal operations*. The focus will be on the organization of artisanal mining and the precious mineral substances sectors.

(iv) *promotion of national mining resources*. Knowledge on the Congolese soil and sub-soil will be enhanced through the implementation of a mining master plan, geological studies, and mining maps. Analytical structures will also be developed.

3.2.1.6. Arts and crafts

The overall objective is to promote the development of arts and crafts.

The strategies envisaged in the area of arts and crafts are:

(i) *continuation and completion of reforms*. The legal texts establishing public support structures will be modified to turn them into genuine support centers through the National Arts and Crafts Agency (ANA) and the Small Business Development Agency (ADPME), in particular. Similarly, trade guilds will be structured and consular chambers of trades established along with professional associations of trades and craftspersons.

(ii) *strengthening the technical and vocational capacities of artisans*. The COSAME program, which supports microenterprises and craftspersons, will be implemented and extended in the various trade guilds through apprenticeships and professional training. School workshops will also be rehabilitated.

(iii) *promotion of arts and crafts activities*. This will be achieved by increasing investment credits, putting in place an arts and crafts gallery (physical and virtual) and artisanal villages. Standardization and protection of arts and crafts productions will be introduced. The establishment of central agencies in charge of collection, buying of inputs, transport, marketing, storage, packaging, and setting up sales networks for raw materials will be encouraged.

3.2.1.8. Tourism

The overall objective is to promote tourism.

The strategies envisaged focus on:

(i) *preparation of an adequate legal and institutional framework*. Think-tank events on tourism policy in Congo will be organized and the national tourism council relaunched. A tourism development master plan will also be prepared.

(ii) *building tourism and human capacity*. Management of the national tourism development fund will be improved. Attractive sites will be developed for hosting the Pan-African Music Festival (FESPAM). Training will be provided for staff in the tourism and hospitality industry. Lastly, access to protected areas will be improved.

(iii) *promotion of viable ecotourism*. An inventory will be drawn up of national potential in the heritage tourism sector. Existing heritage sites will be rehabilitated, new sites identified will be developed and a mechanism for the promotion of all tourist sites will be put in place.

3.2.2. Growth support sectors

3.2.2.1. Transport

The objective is to guarantee safety and security, and the movement of people and goods across the national territory.

The strategies for the transport industry are as follows:

(i) *adopt common measures for the various modes of transport*. So as to equip Congo with a reliable transport sector, a donor round table meeting will be organized on the financing of the NTP with a view to creating a partnership for its effective implementation. The national network of communication links would also need to be increased to facilitate interdepartmental integration and foster healthy competition and intermodal coordination.

(ii) *implementation and strict control of infrastructure building standards*. Compliance with transport infrastructure building standards will be strictly enforced.

(iii) *improvement of security and the movement of people and goods*. Security conditions and the movement of people and goods will be improved by upgrading road, rail, and river transport.

(iv) *improvement of road transport*. Paving of the main trunk roads (RN1, RN2, and other national and departmental roads) will be continued and completed, existing trails will be opened up and the upkeep of existing roads and trails ensured. Modalities for the financing, paving, and maintenance of urban roads will also be defined. The creation of road transport companies will be facilitated and vehicular control and inspection capacities will be reinforced. Road maintenance capacities will be reinforced by strengthening road administration and encouraging the creation of private enterprises. Functioning of the road fund will also be improved through the effective implementation of transfer mechanisms and the rational use of resources.

(v) *improvement of the functioning of the CFCO*. The CFCO would need to be restored to good working order by strengthening its traction and transport equipment. Regarding human resources, measures will be taken to ensure the gradual renewal of skilled personnel. The CFCO privatization process will be relaunched with the aim of finding a concessionaire.

(vi) *improvement of river transport*. Steps would be taken to ensure the upkeep of navigable waterways and port waterways, rehabilitate river port infrastructure, and facilitate the acquisition of river transport equipment. So as to protect the river environment, river surveillance and the combating of river pollution will be stepped up.

(vii) *improvement of maritime transport*. In the maritime area, efforts would be made to rehabilitate, strengthen, and modernize the port installations of the Autonomous Port of Pointe Noire (PAPN). The PAPN will be provided with the necessary dredging equipment. Modernization of the Autonomous Port of Pointe-Noire would help increase the productivity of the port's operations and reduce port passage costs. The Advance Cargo Information

System (ACIS) and the Inter-State Transit for Central African countries (TIPAC) would also be put in place and the Congolese national flag would be promoted. In addition, to protect the coastal and marine environment, maritime surveillance and the fight against marine pollution and coastal erosion will be intensified.

(viii) improvement of air transport and strengthening of air safety and security. This will involve taking steps to improve the infrastructure of the main airports, guarantee air transport safety and security, and create the conditions for the acquisition of reliable aircraft.

3.2.2.2. Electrical power

The overall objective is to supply the country with electricity in sufficient quantity and quality and at a cost that is accessible to all.

To achieve the objective set, the following four strategies have been decided upon, along with their corresponding priority actions:

(i) strengthening electrical power production, transport, and distribution capacity. This will entail rehabilitation of existing production, transport, and distribution infrastructure and the building of new hydroelectric power plants and micro-plants, gas turbines, and power lines. Distribution networks in urban areas would need to be densified to facilitate access of the population to the networks.

(ii) intensification of rural electrification. This will entail the preparation and implementation of a national rural electrification program and the running of rural electrification lines from the interconnected national transport grid. In addition, inland rural centers will be equipped with pico-hydropower plants, photovoltaic solar panels, and other renewable energy sources that will make it possible for people, particularly women, to acquire motorized household equipment, thus reducing the time needed to be spent on household chores and the processing of products. Responsibility for the management and operation of rural equipment and systems will be transferred to the decentralized government authorities.

(iii) completion of the sectoral reform. Rural electrification regulatory agencies will be put in place as well as a development fund for the electricity sector. A sectoral policy and strategy document will also be prepared and implemented. Further, the public operator, the national electricity company (SNE), will be reformed. The reform will involve the outsourcing of some functions, the accounting separation of production, transport, and distribution activities in the first phase, and legal separation in the second phase.

(iv) development of renewable energy resources. This would mean updating the inventories of sites identified for producing energy from non-polluting sources. These inventories relate to solar, wind, and hydroelectric power. In very remote forestry areas, cogeneration using waste products from the wood processing industries will be promoted.

3.2.2.3. Communication

The objective of this sector is to guarantee access of the population, at least cost, to postal, telephone, and information and communication technologies (ICTs) services.

To achieve the objective, the following strategies have been provided for:

For the posts and telecommunications sectors:

(i) strengthening the institutional and judicial framework. The current regulatory authority will be adapted in line with changes in the sector.

(ii) *restoration of the neighborhood postal and telephony sector.* This involves the rehabilitation, equipment, and modernization of post offices and the redeployment of personnel to all of these offices. Installation of the fixed telephone system will also be reviewed.

For the communication sector:

(i) *preparation and implementation of a national ICTs policy.* The aim would be to foster the installation of viable, interconnected telecommunications infrastructure, acquisition of modern, high-performance equipment, and extension of computing tools and the Internet. Fiber optic networks would also be installed.

(ii) *strengthening the institutional and legal framework.* Enabling texts for the laws in force will be enacted.

(iii) *strengthening the information producing agencies.* There is a need to strengthen the human and material capacities of media and communication companies and agencies.

(iv) *improving national media coverage.* This would entail reviewing radio and television transmitters to make them more high-performance and operational. New radio and television relay stations will be put in place along with neighborhood community stations. Efforts will be made to promote non-degrading images of women through the training of media professionals.

(v) *Central, departmental, and communal government Intranet and Extranet networks will be deployed.* The interconnection of national and local administrative entities will form part of efforts to reinforce good governance.

3.2.2.4. Meteorology

The overall objective is to facilitate the development of applied research in meteorology and operational hydrography to improve the quality of life and safety and security of the population.

To achieve this objective, the strategies decided upon are as follows:

(i) *strengthening ownership of climatic factors in areas such as tourism, agriculture, building and public works, air, maritime, and river navigation, health, etc.* The government intends to establish a partnership with the specialized agency of the United Nations for meteorology and related sciences. This institution will support Congo in conducting research on the condition of and changes in the earth's atmosphere, its interactions with the ocean, the resulting climate, and its influence on the distribution of water resources.

(ii) *research promotion.* Efforts will be made to promote a research and research application center whose mission will be to coordinate activities related to the production and exchange of information on the weather, water, and climate in accordance with international standards. Research will be conducted on a national and departmental scale.

(iii) *capacity building of personnel in charge of the management of meteorological resources.* The government will seek to improve the training of qualified personnel to bring their skills in line with internationally recognized standards. Within the framework of partnerships with specialized institutions, training will also be organized for the purpose of transferring competences to local expertise.

(iv) *improve the stock of meteorological equipment and facilities.* The aim will be to acquire high-performance equipment and extend and improve the quality of coverage.

(v) *strengthening bilateral and multilateral technical cooperation.* The idea is to deepen technical cooperation with bodies in charge of navigation and meteorology issues.

3.2.2.5. Private sector

The objective is to increase private sector participation in the production of national wealth.

The strategies linked to this objective are:

(i) *increasing the potential to attract foreign direct investment.* To achieve sustainable financing of economic activity and improve the competitiveness of the economy, the government would need to step up institutional and structural reforms and put the financial system on a sound footing.

(ii) *promoting national entrepreneurship.* A legal and institutional framework favorable to the development of SMEs/SMLs, arts and crafts, and cooperative entrepreneurship will be put in place. Technical and financial support will be provided to SMEs/SMLs, arts and crafts, and cooperative entrepreneurship. A national enterprise support fund will be created. The expansion of training opportunities and enterprise creation will be supported.

Industry

The overall objective is to develop a national industrial sector.

The *strategies* to be implemented in the sector are:

(i) *strengthening support, management, and industrial promotion capacities.* Accompanying measures and specific incentives aimed at improving the national industrial environment, in general, and in each department, in particular, will be implemented. Industrial development zones will be put in place in each department. Capacity building programs for institutions will be implemented and industrial development support mechanisms put in place.

(ii) *building productive capacity in priority areas.* Public sector/private sector/civil society partnerships will be strengthened to promote, harmonize, and leverage initiatives in all sectors involved in the management of industrial activity. Attention will be paid to the targeted integration of priority industries in line with industrial sector and market needs.

(iii) *promoting cleaner industrial units.* Mechanisms will be put in place to foster cleaner industrial production. Further, environmental impact studies will be systematically required.

Trade

The objective is to develop trade in goods and services at the national and external level.

The strategies envisaged are as follows:

(i) *cleaning up of the business environment.* This will involve putting in place trade defense instruments, regulating the distribution function by nature of product and devising a new price policy. Competition regulations and a legal framework for consumer protection will be prepared. The fight against counterfeiting and smuggling will be strengthened and basic commercial infrastructure will be built.

(ii) *building human and institutional capacity.* This will include the training of staff in the areas of trade supervision and negotiations as well as the computerization and networking of ministry structures. The mobility of field services will also be improved and supervision and

support of nationals engaged in retail and neighborhood trade will be strengthened. A trade information network will also be put in place.

(iii) building capacity in the area of defining trade policies and strategies and in trade negotiations (WTO, EPA, CEMAC, CEEAC...). This will require strengthening the capacities of the various stakeholders, public administrations, private sector, and civil society in this area through seminars and workshops and continuous training opportunities.

Banking and finance

The overall objective is to create conditions conducive to the short, medium, and long-term financing of economic activities and access of low-income households to credit.

In that context, the strategies to be implemented are:

(i) creation of a favorable environment for the establishment of financial institutions specialized in long-term loans. Guarantee mechanisms for long-term loans granted by MFIs will be introduced. An environment conducive to the installation of investment banks will also be put in place.

(ii) promotion of equity investment by financial and insurance institutions in existing and future companies. The sector will be revitalized through the putting in place of a framework for consultation and capacity building of financial institutions, as well as the creation and development of non-state support structures.

(iii) human capacity building. Appropriate training and project support centers will be created to provide capacity building services for heads of enterprises and promoters.

(iv) promotion of a low-income credit policy. A policy designed to encourage MFIs to invest more in rural areas will be prepared and implemented. In addition, outreach activities will be conducted to raise women's awareness on the use of microfinance structures.

3.2.2.6. Sub-regional integration

The objective is to contribute to the deepening of the integration process

The strategies in the sector are:

(i) deepening of integration and economic opening. A customs union and the instruments necessary to raise the visibility of regional integration will be put in place. Efforts would also be made to simplify customs procedures within CEMAC, strengthen multilateral surveillance, and develop community solidarity.

(ii) development of transport, communication, and other access-improving infrastructure. Priority should be given to rehabilitation and development works in the road and river sectors. The specificities of coastal and landlocked country would also need to be taken into account.

(iii) diversification of productive structures and private sector development. There will be a need to improve the business climate in the CEMAC area. Given the weaknesses noted, local processing of agricultural, pastoral, and mining resources will need to be promoted and interlinkages developed among the various production activities.

(iv) human capital development. Integration of the economies of the sub-region into the global economy and poverty reduction require sound human resources capable of boosting development with a view to achieving the MDGs. With this in mind, there is a need to

develop scientific and technological training and promote innovation taking account of the needs of all economic and social sectors. The creation of poles of excellence will also be promoted.

(v) *strengthening macroeconomic stability*. Tax reforms would need to be stepped up so as to reduce the significant share of customs revenue in budget revenues. The sub-regional macroeconomic convergence program would also need to be strengthened. In the context of the EPA to be concluded between CEMAC and the EU, the institutional and material capacities of administrations would need to be strengthened so as to facilitate the integration of CEMAC into the global economy.

(vi) *improvement of governance*. The rule of law, the quality of the various administrations, government efficiency, the fight against corruption, and the capacities of civil society would all need to be strengthened. Decentralization would also be promoted as an innovative approach to governance at the sub-regional level so as to build social capital at the level of CEMAC and the CEEAC.

3.3. Pillar 3: Improvement in access of the population to basic social services

Poverty reduction efforts target mainly those population groups whose way of life and ability to function in society are constrained by their standard of living, itself determined by their level of instruction, health, and capacity to meet their own needs. The basic social sectors encompass the priority areas such as basic education and technical and vocational training, health, water, sanitation, and the environment. They also include the literacy, higher education, and scientific research sub-sectors.

3.3.1. Education

3.3.1.1 Basic and secondary education

The overall objective is to guarantee access of school age population groups to quality education.

To that end, the following strategies have been envisaged:

(i) *building the capacity of the education system*. New teachers will be recruited and refresher training provided for existing staff. Degraded infrastructure will be rehabilitated and new buildings constructed. Schools will be supplied with textbooks and teaching materials. Regulations will be introduced governing private education.

(ii) *improving the management of the sector*. This requires compliance with the school map, equity between rural and urban areas, better assignment of teachers, and computerization of the management of the system.

(iii) *improving the quality of service and the status of teachers*. The government will strive to improve conditions of work and learning (reduction of average class sizes, reduction of the proportion of support personnel in the institutions, gradual elimination of volunteer teachers, sanitation in the school environment).

(iv) *improving social services*. This would involve developing school canteens and pre-school and school health services.

(v) *reducing gender disparities and keeping girls and children from disadvantaged groups in the school system*. Efforts to reduce gender disparities will focus on keeping girls in the system through positive discrimination. Targeted actions will also be developed to cater to

vulnerable children. Further, it will be necessary to implement an action plan for the promotion of school enrolment of girls and implementation of texts related to free education.

3.3.1.3. Technical and vocational education

The overall objective is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of technical and vocational training.

The strategies to be implemented to achieve this objective are:

(i) *institutional and human capacity building*. To improve the quality of technical and vocational training, there will be a need to rehabilitate, build, and equip infrastructure facilities to meet the current needs of the sector. Steps will be taken to improve the living and working conditions of teachers and to enhance the status of the teaching profession. Recruitment and basic and advanced training campaigns will be implemented for teaching, administrative, technical, and service staff.

(ii) *development of skills through the learning of trades*. This will require the establishment of special schools and institutions for skills training and learning of trades, in particular education, training, and learning centers, vocational high schools, government technical reference high schools, technical institutes, and trade schools. Efforts will also be made to create specific training mechanisms for out-of-work, out-of-school young people and put in place a vocational skills training and learning development fund.

(iii) *establishment of new training programs consistent with a skills-based approach and development of related teaching materials and equipment*. A market study will be conducted to identify sectors with development potential in line with the needs of the country. Emphasis will be placed on devising teaching methods based on the skills-based approach. The system of alternating work/school schemes, assessment by credit units, and certification to ensure active participation by businesses in the process of evaluation of trainees, and diplomas such as the certificate of vocational skills (CAP), the high school vocational diploma (Bac Pro) and the higher technician certificate (BTS) will be launched.

(iv) *development of partnerships between training institutions and administrations, parapublic institutions and user enterprises as well as with foreign institutions*. The idea is to create space for consultation, promote partnership agreements, adapt existing programs, and open up training opportunities for professionals.

3.3.1.2. Literacy

The overall objective is to reduce illiteracy and functional illiteracy.

To this end, the strategy retained is as follows: development of a national literacy policy. Actions will focus on the training of adult education managers and facilitators and the organization of literacy campaigns. Literacy and re-schooling centers will be rehabilitated, built, and equipped. Literacy programs will be evaluated and assessed.

3.3.1.4. Civic instruction - moral education

The objective is to promote civic and moral education.

The strategy for the sector is to prepare a national policy on civic and moral education (ICEM). This will involve the training of facilitators, trainers, and supervisors, and the inclusion of new ICEM modules in school curricula. To expand civic and moral education in

the general population, information, sensitization, and communication campaigns will be organized in districts and villages.

3.3.1.5. Higher education

The overall objective is to transfer high level scientific and technological knowledge.

To achieve this objective, the following strategies will be implemented:

(i) *deconcentration of higher education*. To better master the flow of the school population and anchor the young rural population, a study will be conducted on local potential to identify favorable sectors for endogenous development. Over time higher education institutions will be located across the national territory consistent with the National Land Use Development Plan (SNAT).

(ii) *institutional and operational capacity building*. So as to develop higher education, a new university map of Congo will be prepared and implemented. In addition, higher education institutions will gradually be rehabilitated, built and equipped around five (5) previously identified poles and their antennae. University infrastructure will be equipped (classrooms, university residences and restaurants, multimedia centers, etc.). Basic and refresher training will be organized for teaching and non-teaching staff.

(iii) *alignment of programs with international standards, including the LMD (Bachelor's, Master's, PhD) system*. Partnerships should be developed between national training institutions in professional sectors and foreign institutions. In addition, gateways should be created to regulate the flow of students from technical and vocational education into higher education. Private higher education would also need to be regulated through the preparation and harmonization of regulatory texts and the preparation of a georeference file of private education institutions.

(iv) *reduction of gender disparities in university*. To address these disparities at university level, more scholarships and social assistance should be allocated to young girls and their access to university residences should be facilitated. Female Master's level students could also be systematically offered scholarships. Women and girls, at the level of both students and teachers, should be encouraged to go into science streams, to assume strategic decision-making functions at universities, and to conduct research.

3.3.1.6. Scientific research and technological innovation

The overall objective is to produce high-level, useable scientific and technical knowledge.

To revitalize scientific research, the strategies are as follows:

(i) *implementation of a policy on science, research, and technological innovation*. Law 15-95 of September 7, 1995, establishing programming guidelines for science and technology development, will be updated and, along with the administrative enabling texts, will form the basis for effective implementation of a new science policy for Congo. Similarly, the strategic framework for the national policy on innovation would need to be finalized and implemented. Lastly, research findings should be promoted and applied.

(ii) *human, institutional, and technical capacity building*. With a view to undertaking research and taking innovation forward, researchers will be recruited and trained and the status of researcher enhanced. This will entail the adoption of an attractive status for researchers and the putting in place of mechanisms to assist in the promotion of research. Emphasis will also

be placed on the rehabilitation, construction, and equipment of research institutes to contribute to the ambitious efforts to achieve progress.

(iii) *development of partnerships*. This would involve strengthening exchanges among researchers of the countries of the South, particularly those of the sub-region, but also with those of the North within the framework of partnership agreements based on priority research programs. Interdisciplinary and intersectoral research programs will also be defined. Promotion of the policy of production and ownership of innovation and transfer of technology from the research to the economic sector will be organized.

3.3.1.7 Culture and the arts

The overall objective is to promote culture and the arts in a context of sustainable development.

To achieve this objective, the following strategies have been envisaged:

(i) *strengthening the institutional framework in the areas of culture and the arts*. A policy on culture and the arts will be prepared and implemented. International conventions and international texts in these areas would also be ratified.

(ii) *promotion of culture and protection of cultural heritage*. This involves developing, supporting and protecting community expression, in particular, the history of Congo, its mother tongues, traditions, arts and knowledge. Emphasis will be placed on the training of senior staff in the preservation of cultural heritage and cultural animation. There will also be a need to build and equip cultural centers and promote cultural industries.

(iii) *promotion of the arts*. There is a need to facilitate access to credit for professionals from the art world to make it possible for them to acquire modern means of production and increase their productivity. Basic and advanced training in the arts will be provided. Consumption of local art work will be stimulated through the regular organization of art fairs and exhibitions.

3.3.1.8 Sports

The overall objective is to promote elite and mass sports.

To achieve this objective, the following strategies have been identified:

(i) *promotion of the national sports policy*. This will involve preparing and implementing a national sports policy. Sporting competitions and athletics meets, as both mass and elite activities, will be developed at intra and interdepartmental, university, school, and corporate levels.

(ii) *strengthening sports managerial capacity and administrative infrastructure*. The idea here is to organize the management of teams in the context of their training, competitions and extra-sporting development. There would also be a need to rehabilitate, build, and equip sports infrastructure at schools, universities, and in communities. Professionals will be trained as sectors develop.

3.3.2. Health

The overall objective of the sector is to improve the state of health of the general population and of women and children, in particular.

To achieve this objective, the following strategies have been identified:

(i) *building leadership, management, and operational capacities for a decentralized health system*. This will require strengthening leadership and management capacities at all levels of the system; strengthening the fiduciary system; strengthening the system of monitoring and evaluation (health information system, epidemiological surveillance, operational research, observatory of the system of health).

(ii) *putting in place an effective human resources management system for the health sector*. The focus will be on preparing a human resources policy to be implemented by a human resources directorate to be established; strengthening the capacities of the structures in charge of human resources management at the central and decentralized levels.

(iii) *rehabilitation, construction, and equipment of health facilities*. The idea is to: rehabilitate, build, and upkeep health infrastructure; equip health facilities and oversee the standardization and maintenance of facilities.

(iv) *improving access to a package of quality essential health care services (EHCS)*. This entails defining the essential services package (ESP) at all levels of the health system and ensuring their delivery; strengthening the management system for reliable and continuous supply of drugs, medical equipment and consumables; promote community commitment and participation; promote equitable access to health services.

(vii) *development of maternal and infant health*. The idea is to rehabilitate selected health infrastructure, provide selected CSI/maternity clinics with technical equipment, and equip the labor rooms and operating theatres of reference structures. Training will be provided for the staff of the reference/maternity hospitals in comprehensive emergency obstetric care (CEmOC), basic emergency obstetric care (EmOC), emergency obstetric and neonatal care (EmONC) and basic and refresher training will be provided for the staff of the CSI/maternity clinics in the treatment and care of STIs/HIV/AIDS using the syndromic approach. Neighborhood campaigns will be conducted to raise the awareness of adolescents and youth on the availability of quality reproductive health services. Community health workers will be trained in the delivery of basic community services (BCS). National surveys will be conducted on the levels and determinants of maternal and infant mortality and on the sexual and reproductive behaviors of young people and adolescents.

3.3.3 Food security

The overall objective is to satisfy the needs of the population in quality foodstuffs.

To achieve this objective, the following strategies have been identified:

(i) *improving access to quality food*. This involves ensuring the availability of foodstuffs in the cities and countryside, facilitating household access to foodstuffs and ensuring quality control.

(ii) *improving parents' nutrition knowledge and practices*. This involves promotion of exclusive breast feeding for the first six months of a child's life. Campaigns will be organized to educate parents on sound nutritional and health practices and to raise community awareness on food health safety, hygiene, and quality.

3.3.4 Water

The overall objective is to improve access of the population to safe drinking water.

The following strategies have been identified:

(i) *improvement of water governance*. The master plan and action plans for the sector would need to be prepared and implemented. Further, institutional and legal reforms will be implemented and an educational program on water will be prepared and launched. Lastly, integrated water resources management (IWRM) will be promoted.

(ii) *building quantitative and qualitative water control capacities*. The idea is to train stakeholders in the sector at all levels to take account of the IWRM and gender dimensions. Bromatology laboratories will also be built for water and food quality control. Measuring stations would also need to be rehabilitated and built.

(iii) *improving access to safe drinking water in rural and urban areas*. This will require rehabilitation of existing facilities and the development of appropriate technologies (boreholes, equipped wells, ferrocement tanks, impluviums, and development of streams) for village water supply. For village management, participation procedures will be adopted, while also training village leaders in community management with the highest level of involvement of women, and existing safe drinking water supply systems (SDWWS) will be rehabilitated and new ones built in the urban centers. Safe drinking water supply systems (SDWWS) will be built to serve all district capitals.

3.3.5 Sanitation

The overall objective is to improve the living conditions of the population.

The following strategies have been identified to achieve this objective:

(i) *extension of appropriate and low-cost techniques for the management of excreta and solid waste*. This will involve extension work on appropriate technologies through the small-scale building, in both urban areas and rural areas, of flushing WCs, improved ventilated latrines, and ecological latrines in schools, health facilities, households, and public places. In addition solid waste should be eliminated in approved landfills or reused.

(ii) *development of collective urban waste water and rainwater evacuation systems*. Existing rainwater collectors would need to be rehabilitated and new ones built. Sewer networks and treatment plants will be built in hospitals, hotels, and industrial installations.

(iii) *Operational capacity building of public hygiene and local government agencies in excreta, wastewater, and rainwater management*. This will entail the training of various personnel and the provision of appropriate equipment to the various agencies.

3.3.6 Housing

The objective is to promote access of the population to satisfactory living conditions and decent housing.

The strategies in the area are as follows:

(i) *putting in place of a national housing policy*. Efforts will be made to involve the private sector in the execution of property development programs to ease the shortage of decent housing. The feasibility studies conducted by the urban land use planning agency will be updated. Efforts will also be made to ensure the strict implementation of urban development plans.

(ii) *putting in place of housing financing mechanisms*. This will involve the conducting of studies on the creation of a national housing fund and a national housing strategy. Studies on the procedures and channels of assistance to builders and buyers of social housing will be conducted to improve the system of housing financing.

(iii) *development of production units and promotion of the use of local building materials*. Promotion will be done through support for self-production initiatives of local building materials and urban and rural housing development programs. This will foster the increase of the national production capacities of local building materials (clay bricks, thatch, etc.) at affordable prices.

(iv) *building the human, technical, and financial capacities of central and local government services*. Given the weak intervention capacities of the administrative and technical urban management structures, this strategy will focus on the identification and programming of training activities as well as the reorganization of the services.

(v) *compliance and enforcement of housing building standards*. Support will be provided to the building and public works research department, the general directorate for construction and the general directorate for urban development, housing, and architecture in the monitoring of enforcement of the building rules and standards for housing.

3.4 Pillar 4: Social environment and integration of vulnerable groups

3.4.1 Social protection

The overall objective is to extend social protection to the entire population

The strategies decided upon are as follows:

(i) *preparation and implementation of a new social security policy*. This requires the putting in place of a genuine and coherent social security system that offers the possibility of creating several regimes (compulsory and non-compulsory, public law and private law) for comprehensive coverage of social risks. The national social development plan will also be finalized and implemented.

(ii) *creation of social security regimes for specific groups covering the majority if not the entire population*. The idea is to put in place a health insurance regime, a regime for families and children in difficulty, a regime of people with disabilities, a regime for the aged, and a student regime.

(iii) *promotion of the good governance of social protection structures*. This will mean strengthening the capacities of the two social security funds (the national social security fund and the pension fund for civil servants) and the promotion of private social protection structures.

(iv) *promotion of non-governmental structures*. Institutional, legal, human, and technical capacity building.

3.4.2. Employment and working conditions

The overall objective is to promote the creation of decent jobs.

The strategies decided upon in the sector are:

(i) *preparation and implementation of a national employment policy.* This will entail the preparation and implementation of a national employment policy. Among other things, the policy will focus on the rationalization of recruitment in the public administrations.

(ii) *support for the creation of employment in the private sector.* Promotion will be conducted to boost entrepreneurial spirit. Private job creation initiatives will also be supported.

(iii) *promotion of highly-labor intensive (HLI) activities.* Incentives will be introduced in support of the relevant sectors (building and public works, agriculture, trade, and urban sanitation, etc)

(iv) *improving the legislative and regulatory framework:* This will require updating of the labor code and the attendant enabling texts. The labor code will be strictly enforced.

(v) *organization of the institutional framework for employer/employee relations.* A national committee for social dialogue will be put in place. The representation of employers' organizations will also be strengthened.

(vi) *improving concern for the health of workers in the public and private sectors.* Occupational health will also be introduced and implemented. An inventory of work-related risks will also be drawn up, adequate prevention and protection mechanisms and procedures will be put in place, as well as a system of compensation covering occupational diseases and accidents in the workplace.

(vii) *improving purchasing power.* This will involve controlling inflation, updating collective bargaining agreements and ensuring their implementation, indexation of wages to inflation, and maintaining a sufficiently high level of growth.

3.4.3. Children

The overall objective of the child protection policy is to create a protective environment conducive to the survival, development, and well-being of children.

The strategies decided upon are:

(i) *promotion and application of conventions, charters and regulatory texts (Convention on the Rights of the Child, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women).* This involves the family, school, and socio-professional reintegration and resettlement of disadvantaged groups, on the one hand, and creation of a children's observatory, on the other. Steps will be taken to adopt and implement new measures to further strengthen the promotion and protection of the rights of the child.

(ii) *simplification of administrative procedures for registration of births.* This entails simplifying administrative procedures for registering births. Application of legal provisions on the issuing of birth certificates free of charge will be monitored.

(iii) *promotion and incentives to improve basic social services for children.* In the area of the health, the quality children's nutrition will be monitored as well as the prevention and treatment of infectious and parasitic diseases, and information and sex education mechanisms for adolescents. In the area of education, the conditions for quality basic education will be facilitated.

(iv) *improving care and support for children in difficulty.* This will call for the creation and/or support of public structures and foster the creation of private structures for looking after children in difficulty.

3.4.4. Special education

The overall objective is to improve access to school enrolment of children with disabilities.

The strategy retained is *human, technical, and institutional capacity building*. The legal framework will be adjusted through the finalization and implementation of the strategic framework on school enrolment for children with disabilities. Efforts will also focus on the training, recruitment, and skills enhancement of qualified personnel as well as the rehabilitation, development, and improvement of access to infrastructure and the acquisition of the appropriate equipment. Functional literacy promotion efforts will be made effective through the preparation and development of specific teaching and learning tools.

3.4.5. Youth

The overall objective is to reduce the vulnerability of young people with a view to their social and economic integration.

The strategies decided upon in the area are:

(i) *preparation and implementation of a youth policy*. This will entail organization of a national consultation with the participation of young people to define a youth policy, adopt a national plan for the promotion of youth and draft the enabling texts of Law 9-2000 of July 31, 2000 establishing guidelines for youth.

(ii) *revitalization of the youth employment policy*. Steps will be taken to implement the existing employment programs (PED, PER, THIMO, etc.) and to promote actions to support the informal sector as well as microcredit access mechanisms.

(iii) *promotion of the fight against deviant behaviors*. The focus will essentially be on promoting civic and moral education, reinstituting standards of behavioral discipline in schools, the workplace and communities. Efforts will be made to increase the supply of structures for healthy, recreational and sporting and cultural activities.

(iv) *development of youth information, education, and communication mechanisms to promote responsible sexuality*. A sex education program would need to be devised for schools.

(v) *improving services for young single mothers and abandoned children*. This will require creation and/or support of public structures and fostering the creation of private structures to care for young single mothers and abandoned children.

(vi) *strengthening the prevention of HIV/AIDS among young people*. Intensification of information, education, and communication (IEC) activities and communication for behavior change (CCC) programs, encouragement and fostering of voluntary screening and the use of condoms.

(vii) *promotion of the African Youth Charter*. Extension activities will be undertaken to step up the process of ratification and implementation of the Charter.

3.4.6. Indigenous people and other minorities

The overall objective is ensuring the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples and other minorities.

The strategies decided upon in the area are:

(i) preparation and implementation of a social protection policy in favor of minority groups. This will entail the adoption of new laws aimed and the promotion and protection of the rights of people belonging to minority groups. These laws will provide for the ban and prevention of discrimination and the promotion and enforcement of these laws will be actively pursued. An agency will be created to protect and fight against discrimination against minorities. Further, campaigns will be organized to encourage the civil registration of births.

(ii) implementation of specific rights and the promotion of additional measures for the protection of minorities. Follow-up committees will be set up to monitor progress in the protection of minorities. The access of albinos to medical care for problems arising from their sensitive skin and eyesight will also be facilitated.

(iii) improving access of indigenous peoples to basic social services. Health and education services will be developed specially tailored for reaching indigenous peoples. The necessary boreholes will be drilled for their water supply.

(iv) leveraging the knowledge and know-how of indigenous peoples in environmental protection. This idea is to encourage the participation of indigenous peoples in the preparation and implementation of environmental protection policies.

3.4 Pillar 5: Fight against HIV/AIDS

The overall objective is to reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS within the population.

The strategies decided upon in the area to achieve this objective are as follows:

(i) intensification of prevention activities at community level, in the workplace and health care facilities. This will entail the implementation of a prevention program in all the sectors and a national communication strategy taking into consideration the cultural and gender dimension of prevention. Sensitization campaigns (IEC/CBC) will be organized and the population will be encouraged to have themselves screened. Efforts will be made to ensure the availability of male and female condoms at affordable prices and to promote their use. Stakeholders from civil society, the private sector and public administrations will be trained. Measures will be taken to control STIs through prevention and care. The safety of blood transfusions will be strengthened and a strategy will be developed to reduction the vulnerability of adolescents and young people to HIV/AIDS, STIs, and early pregnancies.

Specifically, emphasis will be placed on at risk groups in the school environment, the public forces, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and transport sectors, and the prison environment through the implementation of a comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment program and targeting:

- girls and women,
- sex workers,
- public forces personnel,
- fishermen, workers in the forestry sector and the surrounding population,
- personnel working in the various modes of transport, users and communities along the corridors, at connection points and in strategic transport areas.
- teachers, pupils, students, personnel and partners in the education sector. Knowledge about HIV/AIDS will be included in the school curricula.
- health personnel.
- children and young people. This will include ensuring the availability and distribution free of charge of pediatric ARVs and MEGs in health facilities and the availability of confidential screening advice free of charge. National scaling up of care for orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC) will be implemented as well as the prevention of

mother-to-children transmission (PMCT) and the pediatric treatment of HIV positive children. The national strategy for the reduction of vulnerability of children and young people to HIV/AIDS will be implemented.

- indigenous peoples and other minorities.
- inmates in penal institutions.

Support will be provided to networks of people living with HIV/AIDS, religious groups, NGOs and associations actively involved in the fight against the pandemic.

(ii) *improving the overall care of people infected and affected.* This entails making decentralization effective and incorporation into the essential services packages at all levels of the system. This will make it possible to increase the services offered and to step up access to treatment and care of the infected and affected people. Personnel will be trained in medical, nutritional, and psychological care. Treatment will be administered at the reference hospitals as well as at accredited denominational and private health care facilities. Services will be provided to OVCs and partnerships will be entered into for other forms of care. Every effort will be made to reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

(iii) *improving the supply and distribution ARVs and consumables.* This will involve guaranteeing the continuous availability of drugs, reagents, and consumables in all departments.

(iv) *strengthening the monitoring-evaluation and epidemiological surveillance system.* This will require consolidation of the research and studies program, strengthening the capacities of stakeholders, and improving the information collection, processing, analysis and dissemination system.

(v) *strengthening public, private, and civil society partnerships.* Put in place a platform for consultation and exchange to optimize results.

Chapter IV: Macroeconomic Framework and Resource Allocation

Since 2004, Congo has been engaged in a reform program supported by the IMF and World Bank in the context of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF). This program is based on two main pillars, namely: (i) enhancing transparency in the management of public resources, in particular in the petroleum sector; and (ii) improving fiscal discipline. In connection with this program, the government has implemented a number of reforms aimed at stabilizing the macroeconomic framework and improving governance in the country. While pursuing these aims, Congo recorded the performance indicated below over the 2004-06 period:

Overall real GDP growth was relatively sound, averaging about 6 percent, with expansion of the non-oil sector coming in slightly below that figure. Inflation averaged 3.5 percent a year.

The external position was significantly bolstered owing to increased oil production and the rise in international oil prices. International reserves increased from the equivalent of 1.4 months' imports at end-2004 to 10.5 months' imports (or US\$1.8 billion) at end-2006.

The country reached the decision point for the Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative in May 2006, and benefited from a rescheduling of Paris Club debt and interim HIPC debt relief from a number of multilateral and bilateral creditors.

Accordingly, Congo's macroeconomic framework for 2008-2010 is consistent with the objectives set forth in the PRGF program. The status of the macroeconomic framework in 2007 is presented below, followed by an examination of its evolution over the 2008-2010 period.

4.1. Recent developments in respect of the Macroeconomic Framework (2007)

Developments in 2007 were marked by the slowdown in economic activity owing to the decline in petroleum production following the accident on the Nkossa oil platform. The non-oil sector continued to expand at a rate of 6.5 percent, exceeding the levels recorded in earlier years. Annual inflation declined thanks to the comprehensive resolution of the transportation problems which, in 2006, had driven commodity prices upward. The current balance slipped into deficit owing to the decline in petroleum production and sizable imports of components needed to repair the damaged platform. The external position further improved thanks to the agreement concluded with the London Club, which resulted in debt relief of US\$1.6 billion. This agreement is consistent with the Enhanced HIPC Initiative and represents more than half of the total debt relief contemplated for the completion point.

The monetary survey was sound. Money supply expansion slowed somewhat by comparison with the substantial increases observed in preceding years owing to the accumulation of State deposits with the commercial banks. The financial sector remained sound according to the regional banking supervision body (COBAC). A new bank specializing in housing has recently been created and another commercial bank (ECOBANK) has been licensed.

There was an easing of fiscal policy in 2007, explained by a decrease in oil revenue (itself attributable to the temporary slowdown in crude oil production) and an overrun of budgeted expenditure. This overrun is accounted for mainly by the unforeseen costs associated with last year's legislative elections, the increase in transfers to the public refining company (CORAF) owing to the rise in world oil costs, and higher than anticipated capital expenditures financed with domestic resources. Taken together, these phenomena led to a net decrease in the primary basic surplus, which dropped to about 13.9 percent of GDP in 2007 as against 21.5 percent the year before.

4.2 Changes in the macroeconomic framework between 2008 and 2010

It is important to mention here the fact that the macroeconomic framework for the next three years must be consistent with pursuit of the objectives assigned under the poverty reduction and growth strategy. These include in particular: (i) consolidating political and social stability thanks to strengthened democracy, good governance, and peace; (ii) promoting strong, sustainable, and equitable growth; (iii) promoting sustainable human development and improving the living conditions of the people; and (iv) developing the basic economic infrastructures without which there can be no sustainable development. This being so, the country's macroeconomic framework for the next three years was prepared while taking the following into account:

- Overall real GDP growth of 9 percent to 10 percent until 2010 and the maintenance of robust activity in the non-oil sector. This would contribute to significant progress toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals.
- An annual inflation rate of about 3 percent, so as to observe the CEMAC convergence criteria and maintain the external competitiveness of Congo under a fixed exchange arrangement.
- Gradual but continuous restoration of balanced public finances so as to ensure preservation of the country's petroleum wealth in the long term and prevent a decline in living conditions when petroleum production slacks off in the future. From this perspective, one objective is to reduce the non-oil primary deficit in the medium term. Rigorous management of public expenditure will be essential if this is to be achieved.
- External viability thanks to prudent debt management and debt relief under the HIPC Initiative.

The following table sets forth the economic fundamentals through 2010, distinguishing the following: (i) GDP and inflation trends; (ii) the monetary survey; (iii) the balance of payments position; and (iv) the public debt.

Table 7: Changes in the principal macroeconomic indicators, Congo

	2007	2008	2009	2010
<i>GDP and price trends</i>				
	<i>In percent</i>			
GDP at constant prices	-1.6	9.2	10.6	10.2
- Oil GDP	-17.2	15.0	18.1	16.0
- Non-oil GDP	6.6	6.9	7.3	7.5
Consumer price index	2.6	3.0	3.5	3.0
<i>Public finance developments</i>				
	<i>In billions of CFA francs</i>			
Total revenue	1,579.0	1,908.0	2,195.0	2,426.0
Revenue excluding grants	1,564.0	1,879.0	2,165.0	2,394.0
- Oil revenue	1,284.0	1,571.0	1,812.0	1,991.0
- Non-oil revenue	280.0	308.0	353.0	403.0
Grants	15.0	29.0	30.0	32.0
Total expenditure	1,171.0	1,061.0	1,081.0	1,121.0
- Current expenditure	784.0	639.0	605.0	614.0
- Capital expenditure	388.0	422.0	475.0	507.0
* Domestic financing	372.0	372.0	390.0	415.0
* External financing	16.0	50.0	85.0	92.0
Primary balance	509.0	942.0	1,232.0	1,427.0
- In percent of GDP	13.9	21.8	25.0	25.4
<i>Balance of payments developments</i>				
	<i>In billions of CFA francs</i>			
Current balance	-713.0	41.0	640.0	1,201.0
- Trade balance	1,529.0	2,261.0	2,647.0	3,064.0
- Services balance	-1,429.0	-1,200.0	-1,040.0	-769.0
Capital balance	16.0	30.0	32.0	33.0
Financial balance	190.0	627.0	399.0	67.0
Overall balance	-507.0	698.0	1,071.0	1,301.0
Financing of the gap	276.0	-698.0	-1,071.0	-1,301.0
- Financing from reserves	-49.0	-698.0	-1,071.0	-1,301.0
- Exceptional financing	325.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Financing gap	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Sources: IMF and Congolese authorities (June 2007) N.B.: Projections for 2008-2010.

Congo's economic outlook for 2008-2010 is good following the significant increase in the world price of oil. Consequently, the growth rate will range from 9 percent to 10.7 percent during the period. The oil sector, with average growth of 10 percent for the period, will grow more rapidly than the non-oil sector, which will average 7.23 percent. Inflation will register 3 percent in 2008 and 3.5 percent in 2009, and will then drop back to stabilize at 3 percent in 2010.

In the public finance area, the firmness of petroleum prices during the period will keep oil revenue above 40 percent of GDP for the period as a whole. This revenue will increase by 22.3 percent in 2008, 15.3 percent in 2009, and 10.5 percent in 2010. Maintenance of an acceptable level of public revenue will be made possible thanks to growth in non-oil revenue, which will rise by 10.1 percent in 2008, 14.7 percent in 2009, and 14.1 percent in 2010. This favorable trend in non-oil revenue will be achieved thanks to the reforms introduced in tax and customs administration.

On the expenditure side, there will be a decline in public expenditure of -9.4 percent in 2008. Expenditure will grow at a moderate pace in terms of revenue, by 1.9 percent in 2009 and 3.7 percent in 2010. Capital expenditure will increase from year to year, increasing by rates of 6.5 percent in 2008 to 12.7 percent in 2010, with the slow growth in expenditure explained by the declines in current expenditure of -18.5 percent in 2008 and -5.3 percent in 2009 before returning to positive growth not to exceed 2 percent in 2010. Owing to these developments, the primary basic balance will improve over the period, rising from 21.8 percent of GDP in 2008 to 25 percent of GDP in 2009 and 25.4 percent of GDP in 2010.

Between 2008 and 2010, the situation as regards the current balance will be characterized by positive outturns that will produce balances of CFAF 41 billion to CFAF 1,201 billion. These projections are explained by the improvement in the trade balance resulting from export growth and the scant change in the services deficit. The financial balance will register a surplus of CFAF 627 billion in 2008, CFAF 399 billion in 2009, and CFAF 67 billion in 2010. This trend will be attributable to the debt relief that Congo may benefit from under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. With these developments taken together, the overall balance will move in a favorable direction and range from CFAF 698 billion (the smallest balance will be in 2008) and CFAF 1,301 billion (the largest balance anticipated in 2010).

The external debt will decline from 72.1 percent of exports of goods and services in 2008 to 62.6 percent in 2009 and 54.2 percent in 2010. This debt will decrease over the years owing to debt cancellations and debt rescheduling. It bears noting at this juncture that Congo is already benefiting from debt cancellations both through the Paris Club for the public debt and through the London Club for the private debt.

Definition of sectoral allocations

The macroeconomic framework set out the level of effort that the State could put forward until 2011. This level of resources, projected on the basis of cautious assumptions, was not matched up against the needs expressed in the context of the PRSP. The costing of the strategic pillars of the PSRP was not available at the time the paper was being finalized, making it impossible to assess the extent to which the projected resources will be able to cover PRS needs. However, the allocation of these resources was conducted, on the one hand, in accordance with the importance of the actions to be taken under the various strategic pillars of the PRSP, and, on the other hand, in accordance with the agreements concluded with development partners.

This allocation takes account of the strategic pillars defined earlier, to wit: (i) improving governance and consolidating peace and security; (ii) promoting growth and the stability of the macroeconomic framework; (iii) improving access to quality social services on the part of the public; (iv) improving the social environment; and (v) strengthening the fight against HIV/AIDS.

The table which follows shows the sectoral allocations of the various ministerial departments. Starting with 2008, the first column represents the needs expressed by the sectoral departments. The second column shows the shares expressed as a percentage of all requirements, and the third column shows the resource allocations taking account of the level of resources agreed with the IMF. The table is as follows:

Table 8: Sectoral budget allocations, Congo

Sector	Year	2007		2008		2009*		2010	
		Amount	Percentage share	Amount	Percentage share	Amount	Percentage share	Amount	Percentage share
Social development		2,566	0.87	4,615	1.16	5,660	1.18	6,768	1.35
Development of Women		800	0.23	950	0.24	1,200	0.25	1,420	0.28
Cooperation for Development and Solidarity		900	0.26	665	0.17	1,000	0.21	848	0.17
Labor, Jobs, and Social Security		1,316	0.38	3,000	0.75	3,460	0.72	4,500	0.9
Education		22,549	6.55	22,571	5.65	29,160	6.07	34,865	6.97
Primary and Secondary Education		13,269	3.85	13,701	3.43	13,782	2.87	16,292	3.26
Higher Education		3,406	0.99	3,160	0.79	7,950	1.65	10,458	2.09
Technical and Vocational Education		5,094	1.48	5,030	1.26	6,912	1.44	7,495	1.50
Scientific Research and Technological Innovation		780	0.23	680	0.17	516	0.11	620	0.12
Infrastructure		170,931	49.54	194,142	48.54	251,838	52.41	252,664	50.54
Transportation		33,421	9.69	52,000	13	70,088	14.59	64,101	12.82
Equipment and Public Works		74,258	21.52	79,119	19.78	121,512	25.29	125,718	25.14
Energy and Water Resources		48,202	13.97	46,150	11.54	42,830	8.91	45,006	9.29
Post and Telecommunications		8,830	2.56	7,340	1.84	5,763	1.2	7,176	1.07
Construction, Town Planning, and Housing		6,220	1.8	9,533	2.38	11,645	2.42	11,080	2.22
Health and HIV/AIDS		23,952	6.94	22,836	5.71	23,708	4.93	26,019	5.2
Health, Social affairs, and Family		23,952	6.94	22,836	5.71	23,708	4.93	26,019	5.2
Rural Development		12,901	3.74	20,499	5.13	25,620	5.34	29,770	5.95
Forest Economy and Environment		1,801	0.52	3,789	0.95	4,160	0.87	5,470	1.09
Agriculture and Livestock		11,100	3.22	15,070	3.77	19,060	3.97	21,750	4.35
Maritime and Coastal Fisheries				1,640	0.41	2,400	0.5	2,550	0.51
Governance		51,801	15	43,366	10.85	54,315	11.3	54,977	10.99
Office of the Prime Minister		1,151	0.33	1,702	0.43	1,055	0.22	1,700	0.34
Planning, Territorial Development, and Economic Integration		8,079	2.34	8,580	2.15	10,993	2.29	12,167	2.43
Delegate for Territorial Development				500	0.13	600	0.12	720	0.14
Economy, Finance, and Budget		5,254	1.52	5,559	1.39	5,215	1.09	5,900	1.18
Justice and Human Rights		2,317	0.67	5,010	1.25	5,680	1.18	10,050	2.01
Civil Service and Reform of the State		500	0.14	685	0.17	500	0.1	450	0.09

Sector	Year	2007		2008		2009*			2010		
		Amount	Percentage share	Amount	Percentage share	Amount	Percentage share	Projected amount: IMF basis	Amount	Percentage share	Projected amount: IMF basis
Territorial Administration and Decentralization		34,500	10	21,330	5.33	30,272	6.3	20,787	23,990	4.8	22,120
Cultural Development		14,026	4.07	11,000	2.76	13,966	2.9	10,764	17,932	3.59	11,455
Culture and Art		6,382	1.85	3,270	0.82	5,640	1.17	3,198	6,000	1.2	3,403
Tourism				3,550	0.89	3,326	0.69	3,471	6,000	1.2	3,694
Sports and Youth Redeployment		7,644	2.22	4,180	1.05	5,000	1.04	4,095	5,932	1.19	4,358
Industrial Development, SMEs/SMIs		7,733	2.24	10,640	2.67	13,817	2.87	10,413	13,120	2.62	11,083
Industrial Development		1,644	0.48	1,650	0.41	1,540	0.32	1,599	1,504	0.3	1,702
Mines, Mining Industry, and Geology		2,417	0.7	3,400	0.85	1,550	0.32	3,315	2,600	0.52	3,528
SME and Crafts		694	0.2	900	0.23	1,310	0.27	897	2,422	0.48	955
Commerce, Consumption, and Supply		2,375	0.69	4,190	1.05	8,417	1.75	4,095	5,694	1.14	4,358
Hydrocarbons		603	0.17	500	0.13	1,000	0.21	507	900	0.18	540
Sovereignty		38,541	11.17	70,331	17.58	62,390	12.98	68,562	63,907	12.78	72,960
Presidency of the Republic		11,642	3.37	10,929	2.73	12,203	2.54	10,647	11,438	2.29	11,330
Foreign Affairs and Cooperation		1,694	0.49	2,200	0.55	1,025	0.21	2,145	2,275	0.45	2,283
NEPAD				450	0.11	540	0.11	429	648	0.13	457
Land Tenure Reform and Protection of Landed Property		500	0.14	4,250	1.06	330	0.07	4,134	432	0.09	4,399
Communications, Parliamentary Relations		2,511	0.73	4,590	1.15	3,100	0.65	4,485	1,910	0.38	4,773
National Defense		7,267	2.11	30,000	7.5	28,730	5.98	29,250	30,000	6	31,125
Police and Security		9,336	2.71	11,012	2.75	10,162	2.11	10,725	11,554	2.31	11,413
Merchant Marine and Maritime Economy		1,041	0.3	1,600	0.4	1,700	0.35	1,560	2,500	0.5	1,660
Democratic Institutions		4,100	1.19	5,300	1.33	4,600	0.96	5,187	3,150	0.63	5,520
TOTAL		345,000	100	400,000		480,474		390,000	500,022		415,000

This table shows that the shares of the governance, infrastructure, and sovereignty sectors are the largest in the State budget. This is in response to the finding from the sectoral diagnosis of poverty that ranks governance as one of the major causes of the poor performance recorded in the country. The sizable share of infrastructure in public expenditure addresses the need to get the basic socioeconomic infrastructures back on their feet and to provide the country with new infrastructure of value for ensuring its development.

As regards sovereignty expenditure, it bears noting that this category includes expenditure associated with the proper functioning of democratic institutions, the security of persons and property, and the projects of the President of the Republic with respect to his electoral commitments. This is the case of the construction of health centers, schools, and the rehabilitation of highways and farm roads.

In view of the country's shortcomings in respect of governance, particularly in the public finance area, a fiscal reform is recommended, one component of which is the preparation of an MTEF. The latter makes it possible to improve the efficiency of public expenditure allocation and to create the conditions for effective implementation. It hence entails a budgetary framework for the Poverty Reduction Strategy that is compatible with the macroeconomic framework.

To implement this reform, the sectors were prioritized while taking due account of the strategic pillars, with a focus on the latter. These sectors, of which there are ten (10), include: health, education (basic education, technical and vocational education; higher education); agriculture; the environment; public works; transportation; energy and water supply; and HIV/AIDS. The sectoral strategies should be quantified in order to allow for a rational allocation of the available resources that the macroeconomic framework exercise made it possible to identify through the Table of Financial Operations (TOF).

On the institutional level, a service memorandum from the Minister of State, Minister of Planning, Territorial Development, and Economic Integration, and from NEPAD, established the team responsible for drawing up the MTEF. This team, which ideally would be supported by international consultants, is charged with carrying out the following tasks under the supervision and chairmanship of the CNLP:

- Taking stock of the current status of statistical data;
- Analyzing the structure of existing programs so as to assess their consistency with the objectives of the Poverty Reduction Strategy;
- Preparing a macroeconomic framework covering the period of the PRSP;
- Drawing up a comprehensive MTEF that takes account of PRSP priorities;
- Helping ministerial departments draw up sectoral MTEFs;
- Proposing an institutional framework for MTEF implementation (composition of the supervisory commission, technical committee, etc.);
- Submitting a proposed implementation timetable.

MTEF preparation will be carried out in accordance with the following timetable:

Table 9: Timetable for preparation of the comprehensive MTEF, Congo

Activities to be carried out in preparing the MTEF	2008		2009			
	Q III	Q IV	Q I	Q II	Q III	Q IV
Taking stock of the current status of statistical data						
Analyzing the structure of existing programs so as to assess their consistency with the objectives of the Poverty Reduction Strategy						
Preparing a macroeconomic framework covering the period of the PRSP						
Drawing up a comprehensive MTEF that takes account of PRSP priorities						
Helping ministerial departments draw up sectoral MTEFs						
Proposing an institutional framework for MTEF implementation (composition of the supervisory commission, technical committee, etc.)						
Submitting a proposed implementation timetable						

4.3. Debt relief obtained by Congo after gaining access to the I-HIPC

Relief obtained from multilateral creditors and the Paris Club

Congo's access to the decision point for the I-HIPC on March 8, 2006 enabled it to claim the debt relief provided for in the context of that initiative. The two phases of debt relief are to proceed as follows:

At the decision point for interim relief (debt service relief);

At the completion point for relief in respect of the debt stock (balance outstanding).

The interim relief amounted to CFAF 36,810,631,887. This sum is placed in the I-HIPC account at the Central Bank to be used for financing projects included in the PRSP to combat poverty, and may be broken down as follows:

Table 10: Status of debt relief as of December 31, 2007, Congo

CREDITORS	AMOUNT IN CFA FRANCS		
	PRINCIPAL	INTEREST	TOTAL
MULTILATERAL DEBT	3,541,137,911	500,267,973	4,041,405,884
PARIS CLUB	14,743,661,494	5,007,090,419	19,750,751,913
GRAND TOTAL	18,284,799,405	5,507,358,391	23,792,157,797

Sources: MEFB, Directorate-General of the Caisse Congolaise d'amortissement [Congolese Amortization Fund—CCA].

Chapter V: Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy

The implementation of the PRSP, like its preparation, constitutes a major challenge in terms of reflecting in action the sectoral and thematic strategies proposed in the context of restoring growth and combating poverty. It is an expression of the government's desire to promote harmonious development in which the Parliament, civil society, and the private sector will all have roles to play in working to achieve the MDGs. Accordingly, PRSP implementation is based on the fundamental principles of efficiency and effectiveness, which mandate that it:

- Be carried out in close collaboration with the beneficiaries of the development policy so as to involve them in the programs and projects of greatest immediate concern to them;
- Not be exclusively a matter for government to deal with, but rather involve the other stakeholders in the economic and social development of Congo, such as the private sector, NGOs, religious groups, etc.;
- Incur no delays, which are to be avoided through effective resource allocation and through expeditious contract management;
- Be conducted in a transparent atmosphere, with mechanisms that guarantee the visibility, traceability, and oversight of investments. The periodic publication of progress reports on the programs and projects of the poverty reduction strategy, as well as media participation, are necessary prerequisites for this.

5.1. Assessment of the situation

The I-PRSP made it possible to identify a major problem area, namely the weakness of the statistical data available. Based on this finding, plans were drawn up to strengthen the strategy monitoring and evaluation aspects by conducting grassroots surveys. This made it possible to have access to statistical data and information regarded as essential for devising a development policy based essentially on concrete and up-to-date knowledge, which is necessary for analyzing the situation in which the PRS is to be drawn up.

Even though the ECOM and EDS were organized in 2005, and sectoral, thematic, and participatory consultations on poverty were conducted in 2006, the existing statistical data are still insufficient. On the one hand, they have flaws with respect to disaggregation on the departmental and local levels and, on the other hand, there are weaknesses in terms of demographic, socioeconomic, and professional criteria. Moreover, the full range of demand for statistics is not met owing to the multisectoral dimension of the PRS.

PRS preparation is built upon the undeniable gains made under the I-PRSP, such as the availability of basic data and the involvement of the various stakeholders concerned in the process, these being the local communities, civil society, private enterprises, and international development partners, including the agencies of the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions. It also made it possible to draw up technical documents such as the National Plan for Achieving the MDGs and the Medium-Term Budgetary Framework (MTBF). Finally, it led ultimately to bringing expenditure into line with the priorities that had been identified, improving the programming of investment, etc.

However, there were problems with the monitoring and evaluation of the I-PRSP highlighted by the diagnostic study on national assessment capacities, to wit: (i) the weakness of assessment practices owing to the absence of a monitoring and evaluation culture; (ii) the absence of an operational information system given the lack of a systematic data gathering approach; (iii) the quantitative and qualitative shortcomings evidenced as regards skills in the

areas of planning, monitoring, and evaluation; and (iv) the paucity of budgets and of assessment capacities.

In view of this recent experience, the government is resolutely committed, in the PRS process, to treat the issues of implementation, monitoring, and evaluation as major concerns.

5.2. Implementation of the strategy

The implementation of the PRSP is led by the Minister of Planning, assisted by the CNLP. It will revolve around: (i) the sectoral policies now in place, currently being prepared, and/or forthcoming in the medium term (2008-2010); (ii) the priority action plan targeting the resumption of growth and poverty reduction in keeping with the five strategic pillars identified; and (iii) the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). It will be buttressed by the strategy for the monitoring and evaluation of programs, projects, and impacts.

Currently, some of the actions planned in the context of PRSP implementation are already being carried out. They are all consistent with the reforms, programs, and projects initiated by the government in partnership with the development partners and development NGOs, within the global frame of reference represented by the poverty reduction strategy.

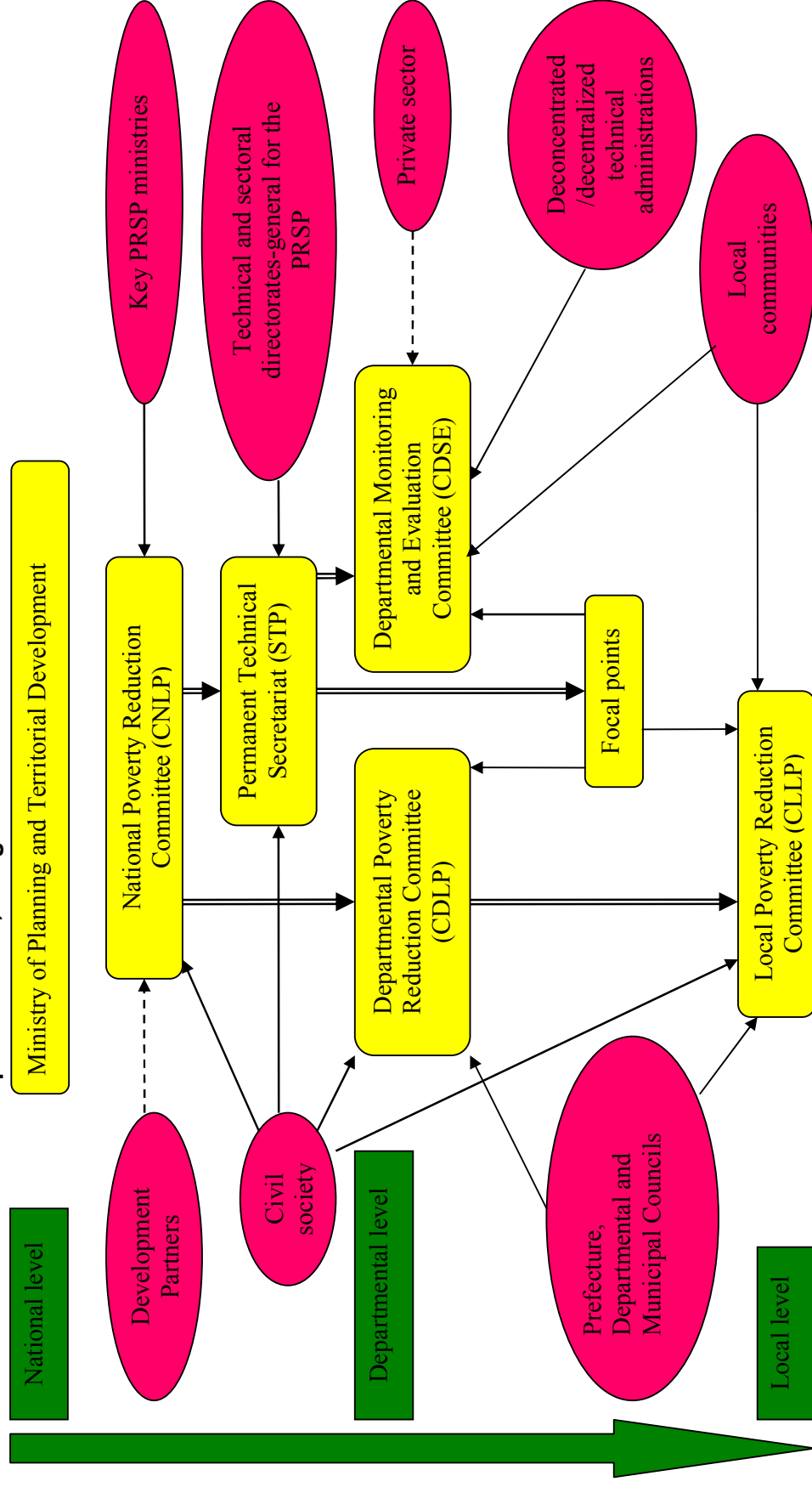
5.2.1. PRSP implementation mechanisms

The CNLP is the coordination and guidance body for PRSP implementation. It includes all the ministries involved in PRS preparation, the development partners, and the SCOs involved in the various sectors of activity. The CNLP is assisted in its tasks by the Permanent Technical Secretariat (STP).

In practice, PRS implementation is the responsibility of the sectoral and technical ministries at the central and deconcentrated levels (Directorates-General, departmental directorates, etc.) each in their area of specialization, in partnership with the SCOs, the private sector, international and national NGOs, and religious groups involved in their areas of intervention. It will be decentralized at the departmental and local levels through the departmental and local PRSP structures, with support from the community-level organizations available.

PRSP implementation will require a program for capacity building at all levels: central, departmental, and local. This institutional capacity building effort will address issues related to the management of policies, programs, and projects (PPP) and to governance from the standpoints of both logistics (material, financial, etc.) and human resources (training, sharing of experiences, etc.).

Chart1: Architecture of PRSP implementation, Congo



5.3. Strategy monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are precious tools for steering the PRS in light of the lessons learned from earlier development programs. For this reason, PRS implementation is overseen throughout the entire programming sequence through the monitoring of strategic actions using appropriate indicators, the monitoring of the resources allocated to that end, and evaluation of PRS impact on the people concerned.

Monitoring and evaluation of the PRS should make it possible to report on and inform about progress made, take corrective action with regard to actions under way, measure the impact of the actions taken on the target groups, and ensure good governance. Information must be gathered in order to conduct studies on the factors behind achieving the anticipated results, and the relevant quantified information can be grouped together in the national statistical system.

5.3.1. Strategy monitoring and evaluation mechanism

Congo has clearly defined the PRS monitoring and evaluation mechanism and its participants and has specified their roles. It measures the extent to which the objectives sought have been met as well as the quality of the results achieved, and produces information of value for decision-making. At one and the same time it incorporates a mechanism for monitoring the process and the actions taken and another mechanism for evaluating outcomes and impacts. The DGPD and the CNSEE are at the heart of PRS monitoring and evaluation.

To achieve the objectives pursued by PRS monitoring and evaluation, quantitative and qualitative data must be collected by: (1) both central and departmental administrative or institutional sources; (2) thematic or specialized surveys; (3) conventional household surveys of the 1-2-3, EDS, and ECOM types, as well as consumption budget surveys; and (4) the general population and housing census. These data are centralized and managed at the CNSEE in an integrated multisectoral database.

The importance of monitoring and evaluation calls for the involvement, strengthening, and revitalization of the national statistical apparatus, with the CNSEE system at its core. The adoption and application of the Multiyear Statistical Development Program (PPDS) are part and parcel of this line of thought. A multiyear plan for building statistical capacities has thus been drawn up to meet the PRS monitoring and evaluation needs.

Indeed, the monitoring of the actions recommended and progress to be made, as well as the evaluation of their impacts, call for a substantial effort with collecting, centralizing, processing, and disseminating data. They are thus predicated on the harmonious functioning, at all levels, of all the national statistical sources, so as to improve the circulation of information among the various PRS stakeholders. The definition of the tasks at the various monitoring and evaluation is such that:

- The peripheral level is responsible for the ongoing collection of data on the strategy. It processes the data and ensures their internal quality. It then forwards the data on authorized media to the intermediate level. This peripheral level includes the sectoral focal points, the departmental directorates, and some specialized directorates.
- The intermediate level is responsible for gathering and compiling data on the strategy. It analyzes the data to come up with initial indicators and ensures the internal quality of data through feedback or inspection visits. It then forwards the data on authorized media to the central level. This intermediate level includes the directors of research

and planning (DEPs) of the ministries and the departmental directorates of statistics (DDSs) or planning (DDPs).

- The central level is responsible for the gathering, compilation, analysis, and dissemination of information on the strategy. It produces and disseminates information on poverty reduction. Feedback sessions or supervisory visits are among the means at its disposal for ensuring the quality of strategy monitoring. It reports to the National Poverty Reduction Committee (CNLP). This level includes the CNSEE for statistical monitoring, the DGPD for monitoring execution, and the STP which draws up and disseminates the PRS progress report.

5.3.2. Strategy monitoring and evaluation indicators

PRSP monitoring and evaluation is performed using measurement instruments known as indicators. They include PRS input, output, and impact indicators⁷ that make it possible to monitor and evaluate the MDGs and the PRS. The choice of monitoring and evaluation indicators, and their characteristics as well, are based on contributions from PRS stakeholders and partners (see Table No. 11).

Production of these indicators will require the organization of the following monitoring and evaluation activities: (1) administrative, technical, and ongoing evaluation of the PRS sectoral programs and policies; (2) pinpoint assessments governed by the sectoral, social, geographical, and thematic plans; (3) annual evaluation of PRS implementation; (4) annual updating of the PRS on a sliding three-year basis; (5) joint midterm evaluation of the PRSP after two years; and (6) updating of a new PRSP every three years.

⁷ Annex 3 provides a definition of the indicators selected.

Table 11: Key PRSP Indicators, Congo

	Indicators	Type	Origin of data	Periodicity	Level of disaggregation	Availability	Reference	2008	2009	2010	2015 (MDG)
Poverty											
1	Poverty line	I	ECOM	5 years	National	Yes, if ECOM 2010 survey	CFAF 544. 40/d (2005)				
2	Poverty incidence	I	ECOM	5 years	. Rural, Urban . Department . Socioeconomic categories	Yes, if ECOM 2010 survey	50.7% (2005)				
3	Depth of poverty	I	ECOM	5 years	. Rural, Urban . Department . Socioeconomic categories	Yes, if ECOM 2010 survey	19.2% (2005)				
4	Proportion of population having less than one PPP dollar per day	I	ECOM	5 years	. Rural, Urban . Department . Socioeconomic categories	Yes, if ECOM 2010 survey	26.2% (2005)	30.0%	28.3%	26.7%	18.30%
5	Poverty gap index	I	ECOM	5 years	. Rural, Urban . Department . Socioeconomic categories	Yes, if ECOM 2010 survey	15.3% (2005)	13.4%	12.8%	12.2%	9%
6	Share of poorest quintile in national consumption	I	ECOM	5 years	. Rural, Urban . Department . Socioeconomic categories	Yes, if ECOM 2010 survey	19.5 % (2005)				
7	Gini index	I	ECOM	5 years	. Rural, Urban . Department . Socioeconomic categories	Yes, if ECOM 2010 survey	41.6 % (2005)				
Political, administrative, and judicial governance—Peace and security											
8	Rate of participation in national and local elections	I	MATD	By election	. Department . Urban/rural	Yes					
9	Index of user satisfaction with public administration	I	Survey		. Department . Urban/rural	Yes, if survey conducted					
10	Percentage of public resources (budgeted and effectively spent) allocated to subnational governments	M	MEFB/DGB	annual	Department	Yes					
11	Amount and rate of increase in revenue collected by subnational governments	R	MEFB/DGB	annual	Department	Yes					
12	Percentage of cases on docket which reach judgment	R	MIDH/DEP	annual	Department	Yes					
13	Number of law enforcement officers per 1,000 inhabitants	A	MSOP	annual	Department	Yes					
Economic and financial governance											
14	Inflation rate	R	CNSEE	monthly	National	Yes	4.7% (2006)				
15	Per capita GDP	I	MEFB/DGE	annual	National	Yes	945.3 (2005)				

	Indicators	Type	Origin of data	Periodicity	Level of disaggregation	Availability	Reference	2008	2009	2010	2015 (MDG)
40	Percentage of households with a radio	R	ECOM	5 years	Urban/Rural Department	Yes, if ECOM 2010 survey					
Private sector											
41	Number of enterprises created	R	MEFB/DGI	Annual	Department Sectors	Not at present					
42	Amount of loans granted to enterprises	R	Survey	Annual	Department	Yes, if survey					
43	Rate of access to microcredit	R	Survey	Annual	Department	Yes, if survey					
Education											
44	Gross enrollment ratio in primary school	R	MEPSA/DEP ECOM	annual 5 years	Gender Department	Yes	72% (2005)	82%	85%	87%	100%
45	Rate of primary school completion	I	MEPSA/DEP ECOM	annual 5 years	Gender Department	Yes	77% (2005)	79%	81%	83%	100%
46	Girl/boy ratio in education (primary, secondary, higher)	R	MEPSA/DEP	annual	Level (primary, middle, secondary, higher) Department	Yes	prim. 0.93 (2005) middle 0.87 (2005) sec. 0.65 (2005) higher 0.58 (2005)	prim. 0.95 middle 0.91 sec. 0.74 higher 0.65	prim. 0.96 middle 0.92 sec. 0.77 higher 0.67	prim. 0.97 middle 0.94 sec. 0.80 higher 0.69	prim. 1 middle 1 sec. 0.95 higher 0.80
47	Literacy rate of those 15 or older (or ages 15 to 24 = MDG)	R	MEPSA/DEP	annual	Gender Department	Yes	80.4% (2005)	86.3%	88.3%	90.2%	100.0%
48	% of higher education graduates who find jobs corresponding to their training within two years of completing schooling	R	MES/DEP	annual	Sector	Not at present					
49	% of budget allocated to research	M	MEFB/DGIB	annual	National	Yes					
Health-nutrition											
50	Life expectancy at birth	I	EDS	5 years	Gender Socioeconomic category	Yes, if EDS survey					
51	Vaccination coverage rate by antigen (measles, DTC3, polio, BCG)	R	MSASF/DEP EDS	annual 5 years	Antigen Department	Yes, if EDS survey	Meas. 57.9% DTC3 65.8% Polio 66.4% BCG 89.60% (2005)	Meas. ? DTC3 73.1% Polio 73.5% BCG 92.7%	Meas. ? DTC3 75.5% Polio 75.8% BCG 93.7%	Meas. ? DTC3 77.9% Polio 78.2% BCG 94.8%	Meas. ? DTC3 90% Polio 90% BCG 100%
52	Infant mortality rate	I	EDS	5 years	Department	Yes, if EDS survey	75% (2005)	63.75%	60%	56.25%	37.50%
53	Child mortality rate	I	EDS	5 years	Department	Yes, if EDS survey	44% (2005)				
54	Maternal mortality rate	I	EDS	5 years	Department	Yes, if EDS survey	781 (2005)	663.7	624.6	585.5	390
55	Proportion of medically assisted childbirths	R	MSASF/DEP EDS	annual 5 years	Department	Yes, if EDS survey	86.1% (2005)	90.20%	91.60%	93.00%	100%
56	Incidence rate, prevalence rate, and mortality rate from tuberculosis	R	MSASF/DEP	annual	Department	Yes, if EDS survey	incid. ? prev. 0.4% (2005) mort. ?	incid. ? prev. 0.3% mort. ?	incid. ? prev. 0.3% mort. ?	incid. ? prev. 0.3% mort. ?	incid. ? prev. 0.2% mort. ?

	Indicators	Type	Origin of data	Periodicity	Level of disaggregation	Availability	Reference	2008	2009	2010	2015 (MDG)
57	Incidence rate, prevalence rate, and mortality rate from malaria	R	MSASF/DEP	annual	Department	Yes, if EDS survey	incid. ? prev. 5.6% (2005) mort. ?	incid. ? prev. 4.8% mort. ?	incid. ? prev. 4.5% mort. ?	incid. ? prev. 4.2% mort. ?	incid. ? prev. 3% mort. ?
58	Proportion of population not having minimum caloric intake	I	ECOM	5 years	Department	Yes, if ECOM 2010 survey					
59	Percentage of children under age five who are underweight	I	EDS	5 years	Department	Yes, if EDS survey	14.40 % (2005)	11.58%	10.64%	9.70%	5%
Living conditions (Water, sanitation, and housing)											
60	Proportion of population with access to an improved water source	R	ECOM EDS	5 years	. Urban/rural . Department	Yes, if EDS and/or ECOM survey	58.1% (2005)				
61	Proportion of population with access to an improved sanitation system	R	ECOM EDS	5 years	. Urban/rural . Department	Yes, if EDS and/or ECOM survey	89.80% (2005)	92.90%	93.90%	94.90%	100%
62	Proportion of population with secure access to housing	I	ECOM EDS	5 years	. Urban/rural . Department	Yes, if EDS and/or ECOM survey					
Social environment and integration of vulnerable groups											
63	Rate of social coverage of the population	R	MTESS/DEP	annual	. Gender . Urban/rural . Department . Socioeconomic categories	Yes					
64	Unemployment rate	I	ECOM or 1-2-3 survey	5 years	. Gender . Urban/rural . Department . Socioeconomic categ.	Yes, if ECOM 2010 survey	33.5% (2005)	30%	19%	11%	
65	Proportion of children ages 6 to 14 participating in economic activity	I	1-2-3 survey	3 year	. Gender . Urban/rural . Department	Yes, if survey					
66	Number of vulnerable children being cared for	R	MSASF/DEP	annual	. Public/private . Urban/rural . Department	Yes	Public: 7,843 (2007)	10,500	11,000	12,295	
67	Enrollment ratio of handicapped children	R	MSASF/DEP	annual	. Urban/rural . Department	Yes					
68	Enrollment ratio of indigenous children	R	MSASF/DEP	annual	National	Yes					
69	% of indigenous population benefiting from programs to introduce income-generating activities	A	MSASF/DEP	annual	National	Yes					
Combating HIV/AIDS											
70	Prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS	I	CNLS	5 years	. pregnant women 15-24 . youths under 25 . adults over 24 . Department	Yes, if survey	. 7.5% (2005)	. 6.15%	. 5.7%	. 5.25%	. 3%

MDG Indicator

Indicator type: M:Means, A:Activity, R:Result, I:Impact

5.4. Role of the statistical mechanism

The statistical mechanism for the PRS is built upon the national statistical system. It plays a key role in PRS monitoring and evaluation through management of the updated and accessible poverty database. It includes the CNSEE and its departmental directorates, the research and planning directorates of the sectoral ministries, and all other producers of data on poverty.

It is aimed at: (i) improving the information needed for better assessing and monitoring poverty; (ii) providing inputs for the comprehensive and sectoral poverty reduction strategies; and (iii) assessing progress toward achieving the goals of the PRS.

For these objectives to be met, however, prior participatory definition of quantitative and qualitative indicators is required from PRS stakeholders and partners, a step which is at the heart of the instrumental structure buttressing PRS monitoring and evaluation.

The financing of data gathering activities, the establishment of the PPDS, and their corollaries of resolving any problems raised by the gathering, processing, and dissemination of statistical information, and the successful implementation of the PRS, are the hallmarks of successful monitoring and evaluation. This means that a cohesive mechanism is required. A ten-year action plan for building statistical capacities so as to facilitate PRS monitoring and evaluation activities is provided in the annexes.

5.5. PRS monitoring and evaluation framework

The PRS monitoring and evaluation mechanism includes two components which cover the monitoring of actions under the strategy by means of appropriate indicators, the monitoring of the resources allocated to that end, and assessing the impact of the PRS on the target population groups. These components are the administrative monitoring of project implementation, and programmatic and technical monitoring.

For PRS monitoring and evaluation to be efficient there must be harmonization of the approaches taken by development stakeholders so that they are carried out in a spirit that complements and is synergistic with the PRSP, the sole reference document.

5.5.1. Administrative monitoring

Administrative monitoring is performed at the central, departmental, and local levels in order to enhance proximity and the effectiveness of actions to combat poverty. It includes: (i) the administrative coordination of PRS activities; and (ii) administrative monitoring the execution of PRS projects by the Permanent Technical Secretariat (which includes the sectoral technical directorates of the PRSP).

With involvement on the part of civil society, international development partners, and donors, this administrative monitoring should lead to the production of annual reports on PRS monitoring and to proposals to the CNLP as regards adjustments to be made, improvements to be introduced, and new impetus to be imparted to the PRS.

It is operational at the sectoral level through the administrative and financial directorates or the focal points. At the deconcentrated and decentralized level, this monitoring is the responsibility of the departmental and local poverty reduction committees.

5.5.2. Programmatic and technical monitoring

There are two missions associated with this monitoring: (i) monitoring the execution of the actions planned and initiated, and the resources allocated to this end; and (ii) statistical monitoring and impact assessment. It handles the production of basic statistics and statistics on PRS execution, the publication of progress reports of half-yearly supervision missions, as well as a technical and financial report to be forwarded to the CNLP. It includes the DGPD and the CNSEE and comes under the STP.

5.5.2.1. Monitoring of actions initiated and resources allocated

The monitoring of action initiated and resources allocated makes it possible to monitor the execution of the projects and programs included under the PRS. The technical structures of the DGPD entrusted with this monitoring are responsible for physical monitoring as well as the financial monitoring of the projects and programs carried out in all the ministries.

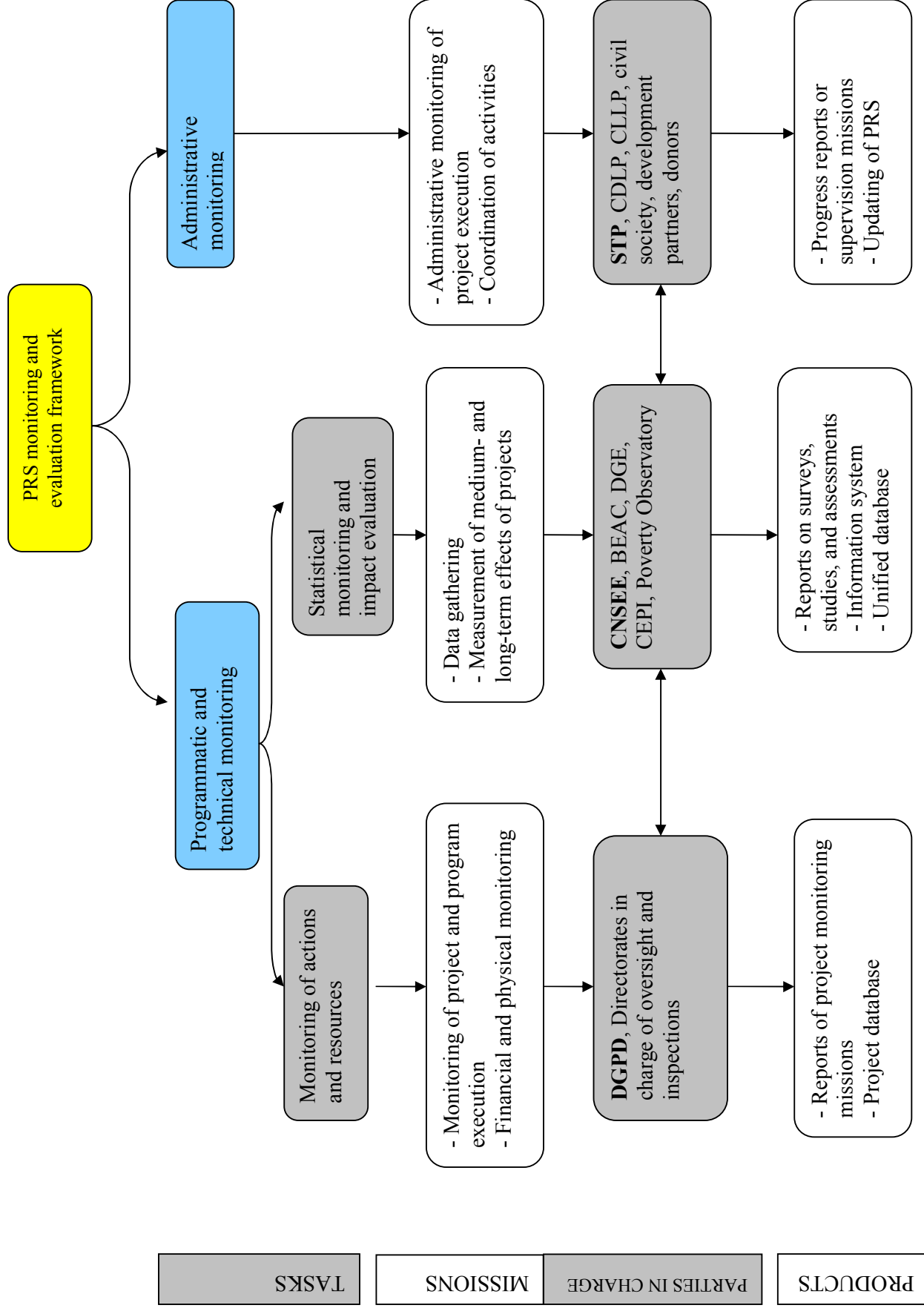
As part of this follow-up, reports must be produced on the monitoring/supervision missions for projects and programs. The DGPD is responsible for this monitoring, and for the purposes is supported by all the administrative structures in charge of oversight, inspections, etc.

5.5.2.2. Statistical monitoring and impact evaluation

PRS statistical monitoring and impact evaluation is intended first to provide information to help orient decision-making in the area of poverty reduction, improving the quality of life, and rendering public services. They are based on: (i) gathering data on poverty, living conditions, household well-being, and economic and social development; and (ii) measuring the medium- and long-term impact on target populations of the projects and programs implemented under the PRS.

To this end, it must: (i) gather administrative data; (ii) organize household surveys on poverty and the usage of public services; (iii) conduct impact studies to assess the quality of PRS projects or programs; and (iv) devise an information system and unified PRS database management system.

Responsibility for statistical monitoring and impact assessment is vested in the CNSEE. It is assisted in its tasks by all the administrations specialized in the production of certain kinds of specific information. The poverty observatory is also able to participate in this monitoring by conducting pinpoint studies in order to measure the effects of certain actions on poverty.



5.6. Partnership

The partnership instituted during the PRSP design phase has continued and is part and parcel of the implementation of its monitoring and evaluation. It takes account of non-State Congolese stakeholders (civil society, NGOs, religious groups, the private sector, etc.) and development partners, including donors.

The government undertakes therefore to ratify the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in order to create the conditions for the effective and rational use of development assistance. Within the CNLP, it will establish a framework for building consensus with development partners in order to achieve a targeted and optimal allocation of the aid intended for carrying out priority projects under the poverty reduction strategy.

5.6.1. Partnership for implementation

PRS implementation is demanding in respect of resources of all kinds: human, financial, and material. The government favors intervention on the part of development NGOs, small farmer organizations, the private sector, and international development partners in carrying out the poverty reduction actions planned.

In this connection, improved public aid and aid effectiveness, debt cancellation, and building management capacities for the various resources are areas of intervention for which partnership with donors and international financial institutions will need to increase in order to ensure convergence between the poverty reduction efforts and the need to achieve macroeconomic equilibrium.

The government therefore wishes to organize diagnostic studies in order to take stock of the management and effectiveness of development assistance. These studies will be aimed at identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the existing mechanism for managing development assistance and proposing solutions for improving the management of development assistance in the context of poverty reduction strategy implementation.

5.6.2. Partnership for monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are prerequisites for successful PRS implementation. They constitute for the government an unavoidable fundamental constraint calling for substantial support from partners simply because the requirements for performing them are so enormous.

The partners in question will guarantee ownership of the process on the part of the people, as well as enhance the transparency and social and public accountability of PRS stakeholders, as well as the quality and relevance of public actions in favor of the people. They will ensure that the reforms are monitored and programs are executed, and will make contributions to the fine-tuning to be made in the PRS in order to update it.

5.7. Associated measures, constraints, and risks of the strategy

5.7.1. General measures

The government will endeavor to implement the PRS while observing the policies, programs, and sectoral projects defined in a participatory manner by each ministry as poverty reduction priorities.

It will support the definition of sectoral action plans for the start-up of the strategy. Such plans will describe in detail the objectives to be achieved, the nature of the activities to be carried out, intervention areas, the implementation timetable for the activities, and the results anticipated.

To this end it undertakes to apply the national plan for building the capacities of the stakeholders involved in the implementation and monitoring/evaluation of the PRS. This plan will incorporate project planning and management components; results-based budgeting and databases; monitoring and evaluation, etc.

It will implement all the reforms relating to efficient implementation of the PRS, such as: in the budgetary area, the adoption of budgeting by objectives and the introduction of global and sectoral Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEFs); in the governance area, efforts will include harmonization of the terms for government procurement and a recasting of administrative procedures.

The government will see to the effective allocation of appropriations for making funds available to the deconcentrated structures responsible for PRS execution at the departmental and local levels. In this regard, the deconcentrated administration shall be supported in respect of the techniques for launching calls for bids and the selection of local operators for project execution.

5.7.2. Specific measures

The government intends to draw up an action plan and concertation framework aimed at civil society and at donors, respectively.

In the former case, the aim is to create the conditions for achieving genuine functionality on the part of civil society organizations to ensure their optimal contribution to the PRSP, given that at present they are scattered and poorly equipped to monitor and evaluate the projects and programs making up the PRSP.

In the latter case, the major concern is to establish a framework for exchanges and for the mobilization of resources from donors whose procedures and conditionalities are not always the same. This will take the form of a strategy for advocacy and for the mobilization of PRSP funding.

5.7.3. Constraints and risks of the strategy

PRS implementation will occur in a favorable environment so as to ensure the greatest possible degree of success. Such an environment entails a number of constraining factors for and risks to proper PRS execution. These constraints and risks are both exogenous and endogenous.

5.7.3.1. Endogenous constraints and risks

PRS implementation in Congo and guaranteeing its success trigger major concerns relating, on the one hand, to the originality and intrinsic characteristics of this new approach and, on the other hand, to exogenous factors.

5.7.3.1.1. Constraints associated with the characteristics of PRSPs

The PRSP approach is based on three fundamental principles, namely: participation; the promotion of sound practices for resource management or governance; and the monitoring

and evaluation mechanism. These principles, which are preconditions for the success of PRSs, are also risk factors.

Participation assumes the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders at all stages of the process (preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation), as well as the ownership of the PRSP process by all stakeholders. Owing to the different (and sometimes competitive) logical perspectives of stakeholders, **the risk of a lack of coordination or cooperation** at one level or another may be regarded as a constraint affecting PRS success. Moreover, among the main objectives of PRSs, a prominent role is given to improving access to basic social services. This objective implies a greater role to be played by decentralized entities in PRS implementation. However, **a decentralization policy that is not effectively implemented and the inadequacy of institutional capacities (in terms of weak human resources and the lack of financial resources) and organizational capacities on the part of local entities** would limit this role. It is evident that the success of efforts under the PRSP will depend upon the effective support of the people and on improved coordination of the actions taken by stakeholders from the State, the private sector, and civil society organizations.

Sound management practices assume, among other things, that all the procedures for determining budgetary ceilings and releasing funding are consistent with the objectives set forth in the PRSP. **Hence, failure to observe PRSP guidelines in preparing medium-term expenditure frameworks and annual budgets poses the risk of failing to achieve the objectives set in the PRS. The same holds true as regards budget execution, if not performed in a timely manner while facilitating the disbursement of funding for pro-poor spending.**

Indeed, inadequate management practices, slow implementation of fiscal consolidation measures, and the current delays in making public investments in water, electricity, roads, schools, hospitals, and rehabilitation of the railroad, among others, pose a risk of impeding the achievement of this threefold objective.

Reaching the completion point for the HIPC Initiative will be one of the major challenges of 2008. **However, deterioration of the macroeconomic framework poses a very serious risk of preventing the positive outcome of the PRGF program planned at the end of the current one.** This would result in failure to reach the completion point and its postponement to late 2008 or even 2009.

The HIPC Initiative completion point is said to be “floating”: reaching it (planned for 2008 by the authorities) will depend on the progress made by Congo in putting its poverty reduction strategy in place. It also depends on many other triggers: maintenance of a stable macroeconomic framework, more sizable utilization of HIPC resources, significant progress in respect of governance, in the area of judicial and structural reforms, the government procurement system, State budget execution, the quality of public services and the functioning of regulatory agencies, and the achievement of specific objectives in the areas of education, health, and the fight against HIV/AIDS. Failure to complete these structural reforms constitutes a risk that our PRS will fail.

The results of Congo’s household survey have shown that there are sizable income inequalities in the country. **The existence of excessively large inequalities constitutes an obstacle to growth and poverty reduction. Under these circumstances, the absence of sufficiently sustained economic growth coupled with a redistribution and job creation policy capable of imparting favorable room for maneuver for poverty reduction poses a major risk to the success of the PRS.**

According to the World Bank, the debt question has become the most acute problem for development cooperation in the late 20th century and early 21st century. This recognition was prompted in part by protest movements which arose in the countries of the North. Civil society has thus expressed opposition to structural adjustment programs (SAPs) and the debt burden, showing their negative effects on the incomes of the poor and on access by the poor to human development assets and the fruits of growth. The Jubilee Campaign was one instrument for mobilizing global awareness and stepping up the pressure on international organizations in favor of the cancellations ever since the early 1990s.

In Congo, debt service is quite sizable, to a point where it constitutes an obstacle to the economic growth that is the pillar of the PRS. Agreement has been reached with Paris Club donors as regards public debt cancellation and rescheduling. For the private debt, a solution has been identified for Congolese private parties. However, for international private operators, Congo has not yet been able to gather together all London Club donors with a view to renegotiating the debt owed to that club's members. ***Thus, the absence of a solution reached in common with the members of the London Club represents a significant risk to carrying out the PRS.***

Finally, there are the monitoring and evaluation activities, which are of recent vintage in Congo. Indeed, the diagnostic appraisal of the country's evaluation capacities highlighted the absence of a monitoring and evaluation culture in Congo. With the implementation of the PRS, the Congolese will be called upon to incorporate the monitoring and evaluation of various development activities into their customary practices. Such a shift requires a change in mentalities and cooperation on the part of all stakeholders. ***Therefore, the absence of cooperation among the various stakeholders and the absence of a change in mentalities constitute a risk for the successful completion of the PRSP.***

5.7.3.1.2. Other constraints

5.7.3.1.2.1. PRS financing and partnership with public and private sectors, civil society, and development partners

It is clear that these needs cannot be met by public financing alone. Private investors are reluctant to become involved in view of the risk of noncompliance with commitments on the part of funding States owing to the narrowness of markets, the instability of economies, and foreign exchange risk. Investment projects in the developing countries are thus often perceived by private investors as having a risk/profitability pairing that is insufficiently attractive. ***In these circumstances, partnership between the public and private sectors and civil society may constitute a solution to the insufficiency of public funds. The absence of a partnership could constitute an obstacle to successful conduct of the PRS.***

Official development assistance helps the government of developing countries with their public investments, and consequently plays an important role in development finance. It supplements local savings which are often insufficient to support the necessary capital investment effort, which itself may also promote development. However, this ODA is often uncoordinated, unpredictable, and therefore inefficient. This being so, it could constitute a risk of failing to carry out the PRSP. Indeed, at the Paris forum the development partners, starting from the declaration adopted at the High-Level Forum on Harmonization held in Rome (February 2003) and the core principles proposed at the Roundtable on Managing for Development Results held in Marrakech (February 2004), identified the following obstacles that would make development assistance ineffective.

These are:

- Donors' failure to provide partner countries with multi-year commitments that would make aid flows more predictable.
- Insufficient delegation of authority to donors' field staff, and inadequate attention to incentives for effective development partnerships between donors and partner countries.
- Insufficient integration of global programs and initiatives into partner countries' broader development agendas, including in critical areas such as HIV/AIDS
- Corruption and lack of transparency, which erode public support, impede effective resource mobilization and allocation and divert resources away from activities that are vital for poverty reduction and sustainable economic development. Where corruption exists, it inhibits donors from relying on partner country systems.

5.7.3.1.2.2. Oil shocks and the oil countershock

The Congolese economy is largely dependent on the oil sector. Indeed, oil revenues represent roughly 80 percent of State resources, meaning that their fluctuation constitutes a risk factor since the majority of the PRSP is financed with own resources. Congo is still specialized in the production of primary commodities, a situation that will continue in the short term. Its economy is thus based on oil, for which prices are determined on the international markets and expressed in a foreign currency, namely the dollar. These two factors, the price per barrel of oil and the exchange rate of the dollar, are generally determined by international economic circumstances, and their fluctuation have made PRSP implementation unpredictable.

5.7.3.1.2.3. Inefficient functioning of institutions

The trio of capacity building, good governance, and economic reform is one of the keys to PRSP success. Indeed, capacity building, that is, developing aptitudes and institutions, is critical for ensuring sustainable economic growth. Without good governance, however, the aptitudes acquired cannot be put to use and institutions cannot properly function. Moreover, economic reforms cannot be properly implemented in the absence of well-functioning institutions. Consequently, the poor quality of institutions constitutes a risk for successful completion of the PRSP.

Institutional quality is of great importance for economic growth. Institutions are important inasmuch as they provide the framework within which men and women participate in the economy. Thus, they contribute to stimulating investment and providing incentives for efficient resource allocation. Institutions become a risk to PRSP implementation in the following cases: First, when they are no longer up to ensuring the proper functioning of the market and, more specifically, when they cease to be the manifestation of a clearly delineated property ownership law that protects investors' capital and interest on that capital; a regulatory system that limits fraud and disloyal competition; and a sociopolitical organization system that minimizes risk and manages social conflicts. Second, institutions become a risk to PRSP implementation when they are not able to offer a stable economic environment through relevant economic and financial policies.

5.7.3.1.3 Other risk factors

In addition to the factors mentioned above, the following risk factors could jeopardize PRSP implementation: (i) the persistence of pockets of insecurity in the Department of Pool; (ii) failure to apply some administrative and structural reforms; (iii) weakness of the national statistical system as regards gathering, processing, analyzing, and disseminating data; (iv) the disorganization of civil society; (v) poor mobilization of the development partners; (vi)

ownership of the PRS by the various stakeholders; (vii) uncivil acts; (viii) noninvolvement of the people in the decision-making process; (ix) deterioration in the terms of trade; and (x) natural disasters (floods, erosion, etc.).

Conclusion

This final Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) is the outcome of a lengthy process that for years brought together various stakeholders, such as senior officials of public and private administrations, members of civil society organizations, grassroots communities, and the development partners.

Following its validation by all the stakeholders involved in its preparation, at the conclusion of the national workshop held on March 28 and 29, 2008, and by the government on April 9, 2008, the final paper now constitutes the frame of reference for Congo's economic and social development.

The government's major options are based on three pillars representing a departure from the past, namely: the promotion of economic growth and diversification; the development of infrastructure; and optimal resource allocation targeting improvement in living conditions and improved access to basic social services on the part of the people.

The new approach focused essentially on reducing the level of poverty reflects strong political will to pursue measures that favor the people.

To pursue these options successfully, the government undertakes to promote good governance practices.

Strengthening the national statistical system and refining certain sectoral strategies as necessary remain priorities. Major efforts have been made to ensure ownership of the PRSP by all stakeholders so as to enhance its implementation and improve the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy.

Sound PRSP implementation for one year will make it possible to reach the completion point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, thereby opening up further development prospects.

ANNEXES

- ANNEX I:** Definitions of key indicators
- ANNEX II:** Problems matrix
- ANNEX III:** Strategies and actions matrix

ANNEX I: Definitions of key indicators

Poverty	
1	Poverty lines The poverty line is determined by the cost of basic needs method, on the basis of a standard caloric threshold of 2,400 Kcal per day per adult equivalent, which is used to calculate a food poverty line, to which is added an amount corresponding to nonfood needs.
2	Incidence of poverty Proportion of individuals below the poverty line.
3	Depth of poverty Average relative gap between the poverty line and the average expenditures of poor households.
4	Proportion of population with less than one PPP dollar per day Proportion of the population having less than US\$1 per day using international prices for 1993, corrected for purchasing power parity.
5	Poverty gap index Average gap expressed as a percentage of the poverty line below \$1 per day PPP [incidence of poverty x depth of poverty].
6	Share of poorest quintile in national consumption Proportion of national consumption by the poorest 20 percent of households.
7	Gini index Summary measurement of the difference between the actual distribution of consumption expenditure and a hypothetical distribution in which each person receives an identical share representing the absence of inequality and the greatest inequality possible.
Political, administrative, and judicial governance—Peace and security	
8	Participation rate in national and local elections Ratio of the number of persons who voted and the number of persons registered to vote.
9	Index of user satisfaction with public administration Percentage of users of the public administration who are satisfied with its services.
10	Percentage of public resources allocated to local governments (as budgeted and as effectively spent) Ratio between the appropriations to sub-national governments in the Budget Law and total appropriations.
11	Amount and rate of growth of own revenues collected by sub-national governments Ratio between the appropriations effectively spent by sub-national governments and total appropriations spent.
12	Percentage of cases ruled upon as against number on docket Amount of revenue collected at the local level, and the ratio of the year-on-year increase in collections to the amount from the preceding year.
13	Number of public security officers per 1,000 inhabitants Ratio of the number of cases ruled upon to the number of cases on the docket.
Economic and financial governance	
14	Inflation rate Ratio of the number of public security officers and the number of inhabitants, expressed as x per 1,000
15	Per capita GDP Average annual increase in prices measured by the ratio of the general price index (GPI) of the current year to the general price index of the preceding year.
16	Real GDP growth rate Ratio of the real value of the current year's GDP to the population.
17	Ratio of debt service to exports Ratio of the real value of the current year's GDP at the prices of a base year and the value of GDP of the preceding year to the prices of the base year [(GDP year n – GDP year n-1)/GDP year n-1]*100
18	Ratio of current expenditure to tax receipts Ratio of the amount a country must pay its creditors annually, consisting of amortization (partial repayment of borrowed capital) and interest, to the value of commercial exports.
19	Percentage of budget for priority sectors Ratio of current expenditure in the budget to tax receipts
Gender	
20	Percentage of women Deputies Share of budget allocated to education, health, agriculture, etc.
21	Percentage of women among non-agricultural wage earners Number of seats held by women expressed as a percentage of all seats filled.
22	Female/male ratio of microcredit beneficiaries Ratio of the number of women wage-earners in the nonagricultural sector to the total number of wage earners in the nonagricultural sector.
Environment	
23	Proportion of forest zones Ratio of the number of women to the number of men receiving microcredits during the year.
	Ratio of the land area of forest zones to the total land area of the country.

24	Surface area of protected ecosystems	Surface areas of nature reserves, wilderness areas, and national parks.
25	Percentage of households using solid fuels (wood, charcoal)	Proportion of the population using biomass (wood, charcoal, and agricultural waste) and coal as the primary source of household energy.
Growth sectors		
26	Share of oil sector in national GDP	Ratio of the added value of the petroleum sector to GDP.
27	Share of forestry sector in national GDP	Ratio of the added value of the forestry sector to GDP.
28	Proportion of local wood production that is processed	Ratio of the quantity of wood undergoing processing to the quantity of wood cut.
29	Share of agriculture (plant and animal production) in GDP	Ratio of the added value of agriculture to GDP.
30	Share of cultivated land that is mechanically tilled	Ratio of the land area tilled with farm machinery to the land area tilled with manual tools.
31	Quantity of gold and diamonds declared	Quantities of gold and diamonds found in the country and declared to the mining administration.
Growth-supporting sectors		
32	Length of paved roads	Number of kilometers of paved roads.
33	Length of dirt roads	Number of kilometers of dirt roads.
34	Length of maintained roads (paved and dirt)	Number of kilometers of maintained roads.
35	Number of passengers carried by the CFCCO	Number of travelers carried by the CFCCO in a year.
36	Tonnage of goods carried by the CFCCO	Tonnage of goods carried by the CFCCO in a year.
37	Rate of access to electricity	Ratio of the number of persons with access to electricity to the total target population.
38	Number of mobile telephone subscribers per 100 inhabitants	Number of mobile telephone subscribers as a percentage of the total population.
39	Number of computers used per 100 inhabitants	Number of computers used as a percentage of the total population.
40	Percentage of households with a radio	Ratio of the number of households with at least one radio to the total number of households.
Private sector		
41	Number of businesses created	Number of businesses created.
42	Amount of loans granted to businesses	Total amount of loans granted to businesses in the year.
43	Rate of access to microcredit	Percentage of households having benefited from a microcredit.
Education		
44	Net enrollment ratio in primary school	Ratio of the number of children of official school age who are registered in primary school to the total number of children of official school age for this level of education.
45	Primary school completion rate	Percentage of pupils who entered the first year of primary school who completed the sixth year.
46	Girl/boy ratio in education (primary, secondary, higher)	Ratio of the number of girl pupils registered in the cycle in question to the number of boy pupils.
47	Literacy rate of persons aged 15 or older	Percentage of persons aged 15 or more who can read, write, and understand a short, simple text on their daily life in any language.
48	Percentage of graduates from higher education who find a job corresponding to their training within two years after completing their studies	Ratio of the number of graduates from the past two school years who have found a job in their field of study to the total number of graduates from the past two years (graduate = recipient of a terminal degree).
49	Percentage of budget allocated to research	Share of the budget allocated to research.
Health and nutrition		
50	Life expectancy at birth	Average lifespan of a fictional generation living with the mortality conditions of the year.
51	Rate of vaccination coverage by antigen (measles, DTC3, polio, BCG)	Ratio of the number of children in an age group that have been vaccinated to the total number of children in the same age group.
52	Infant mortality rate	Probability of death between the date of birth and first birthday (expressed as the number per 1,000 live births).
53	Child mortality rate	Ratio of the number of deaths after the first birthday and before the age of 5 per 1,000 births during a given period.
54	Maternal mortality rate	Number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, said deaths occurring during pregnancy, during childbirth, or within 42 days (six weeks) as a consequence of childbirth during a given period.
55	Proportion of medically assisted childbirths	Ratio between the number of women aged 15-49 assisted by qualified health personnel to the number of women aged 15-

		49 to have given birth during the year.
56	Tuberculosis incidence, prevalence, and mortality rates	Incidence = new cases occurring during a given period; prevalence = number of cases existing in the population at a given moment; mortality = number of persons dying from the disease during a given period. Rate = ratio of the number of xxx to the total population.
57	Malaria incidence, prevalence, and mortality rates	Incidence = new cases occurring during a given period; prevalence = number of cases existing in the population at a given moment; mortality = number of persons dying from the disease during a given period. Rate = ratio of the number of xxx to the total population.
58	Proportion of population not obtaining minimum caloric intake	Ratio of the number of persons not reaching the 2,450 kcal threshold to the total population.
59	Percentage of children under age 5 that are underweight	Percentage of children under age 5 whose body weight is less than 2 standard deviations (SDs) from the median weight of the reference population.
Living conditions (water, sanitation, housing)		
60	Proportion of population with access to an improved water source	Proportion of the population using any of the following means to obtain the drinking water it needs: piped water, public tap, pumping from underground, well (protected or sheltered), or covered spring.
61	Proportion of population with access to improved sanitation systems	Percentage of the population with access to a sanitation system that meets two conditions: the existence of a system (sewer, septic tank, cesspool, latrine), and cover for same.
62	Proportion of population with secure housing access	Proportion of the population in possession of a document attesting to secure occupancy status (as owner or renter) and protection from arbitrary eviction.
Social environment and integration of at-risk groups		
63	Rate of social coverage of the population	Ratio of the number of persons benefiting from at least one social coverage arrangement to the population as a whole.
64	Unemployment rate	Ratio of the number of unemployed (persons not engaged in remunerated employment or not self-employed, available for work, and looking for a job) to the total labor force.
65	Proportion of children aged 6 to 14 who are actively employed	Ratio of the number of children aged 6 to 14 who are engaged in economic activity (production of market or non-market goods and services in exchange for wages or a salary in cash or in kind, or with a view to obtaining a family benefit or gain).
66	Number of at-risk children being cared for	Number of at-risk children being cared for.
67	Enrollment ratio of handicapped children	Ratio of the number of handicapped children in school to the total number of handicapped children.
68	Enrollment ratio of indigenous children	Ratio of the number of indigenous children in school to the total number of indigenous children.
69	Percentage of indigenous persons benefiting from programs to establish income-generating activities	Ratio of the number of indigenous persons benefiting from programs to establish income-generating activities to the total indigenous population.
Combating HIV/AIDS		
70	HIV/AIDS prevalence rate	Proportion of individuals living with HIV/AIDS.

ANNEX II: Problems matrix

Area	General objective	Problems	Specific objectives
Axis I: Improvement of governance, and consolidation of peace and security			
Political governance			
Political governance	Promote sound political practices, individual and collective freedoms, and independent media	<p>Weakness of constitutional institutions and participants in the management and control of resources</p> <p>Lack of a democratic culture</p> <p>Abuse of authority and impunity</p> <p>Poor interpretation of legal texts and weak application thereof</p> <p>Limited involvement of grassroots communities in decision-making processes</p> <p>Low representation of women and people from the grassroots in decision-making spheres</p> <p>Poor organization of civil society and the media</p>	<p>Build material and human capacities of constitutional institutions to enable them fully to carry out their roles</p> <p>Strengthen democratic culture and peace</p>
Decentralization	Promote local development through a concomitant transfer of authority and resources (human, material, and financial) to local elected officials	<p>Poor institutional and human capacities at the local level</p> <p>Ineffectiveness of mechanisms for citizen participation in the management of local affairs</p> <p>Insufficient financial resources and irregular transfers</p>	<p>Introduce a quota policy with regard to women for any appointment and for ballot lists</p> <p>Improve the governance of the political parties and civil society organizations</p> <p>Guarantee the freedom and independence of the media</p> <p>Establish mechanisms intended to finalize the legal framework and build stakeholders' capacities</p> <p>Prepare the texts and create mechanisms concerning citizen participation in local affairs, and establish a territorial civil service</p> <p>Implement fiscal and tax reforms in sub-national governments</p>
Departmental and local development	Unify the territory through balanced development	<p>Insufficient infrastructure</p> <p>Outdated and deteriorated existing infrastructure</p> <p>Difficult access to energy and telecommunications on the part of the people</p> <p>Low competitiveness and lack of attractiveness of territorial entities</p> <p>Predominance of an economy with extremely low productivity</p> <p>Aging labor force</p> <p>Archaic technologies used</p> <p>Poor use of natural potential</p> <p>Low development and poor distribution of support services for the economy</p> <p>Precarious technical and financial support system</p> <p>Poor product marketing</p> <p>Almost total lack of industries</p> <p>Poorly adapted local development</p>	<p>Develop infrastructures</p> <p>Restructure departmental and local economies</p>

Area	General objective	Problems	Specific objectives
Gender	Reduce gender inequalities by empowering women economically, socially, culturally, and politically	Shortage and inequitable distribution of equipment	Structure urban development and housing in the departments
		Lack of housing security	
		Serious deterioration of State housing stock	Protect the environment
		Plunder of state land holdings	
		Absence of steering tools (concertation framework, departmental and local development policy, financing framework), resulting in a duplication of actions initiated simultaneously at the national, sectoral, and local levels	
		Lack of a national gender policy	Prepare and implement a national gender policy
		Low education levels and poor development of maternal health	Promote girl/boy parity in education and promote the development of maternal health
Environment	Preserve the environment in a sustainable manner while protecting the natural heritage and making rational use of biodiversity resources	Low representation of women in decision-making spheres	Promote equitable representation and equal participation of women and men, girls and boys, in decision-making at all levels
		Persistence of unpunished acts of violence against women	Combat all forms of violence against women
		Weight of outmoded usages and customs leading to women's lack of understanding of their rights	Promote women's rights
		Limited access to resources and means of production	Improve the economic autonomy of women
		Poor understanding of the environmental problem on the part of the public	Bolster the fight against HIV/AIDS in favor of girls and women
		Poor incorporation of the environmental dimension in project preparation and implementation	Capacity-building of stakeholders on environmental issues
		Limited capacities for monitoring the air, water, and soil	
		Lack of a management plan for municipal, industrial, and medical waste	Introduce air, water, and soil quality control systems
		Lack of environmental intelligence	Prepare and apply a management plan for municipal, industrial, and medical waste
			Introduce an early warning and rapid response system in the event of major and minor disasters (pollution from hydrocarbons, erosion, floods, drought, locust infestations, etc.)
Peace and security	Consolidate peace and security through good governance and the culture of peace, and guarantee the free movement of persons and goods		Introduce a scientific intelligence system relating to the deliberate or accidental introduction of invasive plant or animal species
		Proliferation of noise pollution sources	Introduce a noise pollution policy
Peace and security	Consolidate peace and security through good governance and the culture of peace, and guarantee the free movement of persons and goods	Limited culture of punishment	Bolster security to prevent conflicts and build a sustainable peace
		Elements of the law enforcement authorities insufficiently trained	Improve the capacities of the law enforcement authorities and improve conditions in the military
		Poor conditions in military	
		Persistence of delinquency and deviant behaviors	Intensify the fight against drug trafficking and use
		Continued insecurity in Pool	Continue and complete the disarmament, demobilization, and reinsertion program for ex-combatants
			Complete the securitization of Pool
		Violence against women and girls	Take steps to eliminate violence against women and girls

Area	General objective	Problems	Specific objectives
			Strengthen the fight against HIV/AIDS within the population and especially among law enforcement authorities
Administrative and judicial governance			
Administrative and judicial governance	Improve the performance of public institutions in order to consolidate the rule of law and offer quality public services to the people	Politicization of personnel and failure to observe the institutional and regulatory framework	Enhance capacities in the area of preparing development policies and strategies and managing reform
		Development of fraud, corruption, and misappropriation	
		Complexity of laws and regulations and slowness in administrative and judicial proceedings	Conduct a legal and judicial reform, including that of procedures
		Confusion over the roles of justice and public order services	Promote understanding of legal proceedings and texts
		Arbitrary arrests and abusive detentions	
		Poor public understanding of judicial proceedings and texts	
		Inadequacy and poor management of human resources	Build human capacities and strengthen administrative and penitentiary infrastructures
Transparency, corruption, and fraud	Promote transparency and reduce corruption and fraud	Shortage and poor condition of administrative and penitentiary infrastructures	
		Weakness of the national statistical information system	Enhance the capacities of the national statistical system
		Poor transparency of the management of public affairs	Enhance transparency in the management of public affairs
		Fraud, corruption, and misappropriation	Improve the efficiency of the system for the surveillance, control, and sanctioning of government employees
			Improve the compensation of government employees
Economic and financial governance			
Economic and financial governance	Improve the country's macroeconomic framework in a sustainable manner	Limited capacity for defining policies and strategies	Build capacities in the area of preparing development policies and strategies and the management of reforms
		Slow implementation of structural reforms, particularly in the oil sector, government procurement and contracting, and the management of public investments	Reform government finance
		Poor fiscal discipline	Improve the management of government procurement
		Complex and excessive regulation, which is a source of corruption and economic inefficiency	
		Weakness of administrative controls and citizens	Strengthen control mechanisms and promote reporting requirements
		Poor debt management capacity	Improve debt management
Axis 2: Promotion of growth and macroeconomic stability			
Growth sectors			
Oil	Improve the management of the petroleum sector to optimize the use of revenue for the development of the other sectors	Marketing and monitoring of output are poorly controlled	Make the most of the share of crude oil reverting to the State
		Weakness of national expertise in controlling oil extraction	Improve the control of production and exports
		Management lacks transparency	Improve the governance of oil resources and the transparency of their management

Area	General objective	Problems	Specific objectives
Forests	Develop the forestry sector by improving the management of resources and expanding on-site processing	Failure to finalize the implementing texts of the liquid and gas hydrocarbons code	Strengthen the legal framework, institutional capacities, and national expertise
		Inadequate national technical expertise	Promote subcontracting and build local technical capacity
		Poor supply of petroleum products in the interior of the country	Regularly supply the entire national territory with petroleum products
		High air pollution and water pollution from oil extraction	Increase refining capacities
		Low degree of participation of local populations in ecosystem management	Require oil companies to take steps to treat polluting waste and clean areas that are already polluted
		Weak management of forestry resources	Involve the people in the sustainable and rational management of forestry and faunal resources
		Problems implementing the provisions of the new forestry code	Improve the management of forestry resources
		Fraudulent exploitation and illegal trade in forestry and faunal products	Promote the application of the regulations
		Low participation of nationals in the timber sub-sector	Combat fraudulent exploitation and illegal trade in forestry and faunal products
		Processing sub-sector insufficiently developed	Develop local processing and promote the participation of local enterprises in the timber sub-sector
Agriculture, livestock, and fisheries	Sustainably increase agro-pastoral production, aquaculture production, and fisheries production, in order to reduce dependency and guarantee food security	Agriculture	Strengthen the fight against HIV/AIDS among workers in the sector and the surrounding populations
	Livestock	Absence of a national agricultural policy	Apply a national agricultural policy
		Archaic and rudimentary farming methods	Create conditions conducive to production
		Absence of extension services and support for farmers	
		Inadequate road links to enable produce to be delivered outside the department	
		Weakness of storage and processing infrastructures	Develop storage and processing infrastructures for agricultural products
			Take care to develop environmentally friendly agriculture
		Absence of a national livestock policy	Develop and apply a national livestock policy
		Lack of any genuine incentive to create livestock farming units	Create conditions conducive to the production of livestock products
		Lack of support structures	
	Fisheries	Weakness of the veterinary sector	Create conditions conducive to the processing and marketing of livestock products
		Absence of preservation and processing infrastructures	Strengthen the human and institutional capacities of the livestock sector
		Limited human and institutional capacities of the sector	Develop and apply a national fisheries policy
		Absence of a national fisheries policy	Strengthen the legal and institutional framework
		Weakness of the legal and institutional framework	Promote fishery and aquaculture production
		Underdeveloped continental shelf and maritime fisheries	
		Underdeveloped aquaculture sector	

Area	General objective	Problems	Specific objectives		
Mines	Promote mining activity	Weakness of preservation and processing infrastructures	Promote processing and marketing structures for fishery and aquaculture products		
		Weak expertise in the fisheries sector	Develop expertise in the fisheries sector		
		Poor acknowledgement of the survival of resources	Promote sustainable aquaculture		
		Strong exposure of fishermen to HIV/AIDS owing to their migratory activity	Strengthen the fight against HIV/AIDS for farmers, livestock farmers, and in particular in the continental shelf fisheries sector		
		Incomplete application of the mining code	Strengthen the existing legal framework		
		Lack of a master plan for the sector	Build the human and institutional capacities of the sector		
		Lack of equipment and suitable material in the administration, and lack of training, retraining, and continuing training for mid-range officials			
		Weakness in the monitoring of public/private partnership agreements			
		Lack of organization of non-industrial mining: gold washing and diamond prospecting			
		Extremely limited knowledge of sub-soils			
Tourism	Promote tourism	Inadequacy and outdated nature of mining maps	Coordinate the development of non-industrial operations: gold washing and diamond prospecting		
		Lack of research and analysis structures	Promote national mining resources		
		Lack of a sectoral strategy for tourism	Develop an adequate legal and institutional framework		
		Inadequacy of hotel infrastructures and poor development of transportation	Build human capacities and the capacity to handle tourists		
		Weakness in the areas of hotel and tourism training	Promote ecologically viable tourism		
Limited presence of private operators in the sector	Continue and complete reforms				
Crafts	Promote crafts	Poor utilization of tourist sites and limited access to such sites	Build the technical and professional capacities of craftsmen		
		Ineffectiveness of support institutions	Promote crafts activities		
		Excessive tax burden and administrative hassles	Build the technical and professional capacities of craftsmen		
		Problems obtaining supplies of raw materials			
		Problems accessing new technologies	Promote crafts activities		
		Credit access difficulties			
		No coverage of risks	Build the technical and professional capacities of craftsmen		
		Weakness of basic infrastructures such as water, electricity, roads			
		Growth-supporting sectors			
Transportation	Guarantee the secure and safe movement of persons and goods throughout the national territory	Slow application of the National Transport Plan	Introduce common measures for all modes of transport		
		Failure to observe construction standards for transport infrastructure	Guarantee observance of construction standards for transport infrastructure		
		Insecurity of road, river, and rail transportation	Improve the secure movement of persons and goods		
		Insufficiently developed road network	Improve road transport		
		Degraded condition of existing road network			
Road transport	Road transport	Absence of structured road transport companies			
		Absence of vehicle inspection structures			

Area	General objective	Problems	Specific objectives
	Rail transport	Shortcomings in the collection, management, and mobilization of road fund resources	Improve the functioning of the CFCO
		Poor administrative capacities in the roads sector	
		Aging of the CFCO (aging track, obsolete and inadequate equipment, rundown station buildings, dismantled maintenance workshop)	
		Insufficient locomotives and rolling stock	
	River transport	Aging staff	Improve river transport
		Lack of maintenance of navigable waterways	
		Weakness of port equipment	
	Maritime transport	Insufficient river transport equipment	Improve maritime transport
		Age of fleet	
		Failing electrical, water, and sanitation networks of the PAPN	
		Weakness of port installations	
Electricity	Air transport	Inadequate dredging	Improve air transport and enhance air security and safety
		Lack of equipment for maritime inspections	
		Inadequate airport structures in major airports	
		Low aircraft reliability	
	Provide the country with electricity in sufficient quantity and of sufficient quality, at costs accessible to all	Insufficient meteorological coverage	Strengthen the fight against HIV/AIDS in the sector
		Inadequate and aged electrical energy production equipment	
		Inadequate and aged distribution grid	
		Low degree of electrification in the countryside	
		Poor performance by the public operator (SNE)	
		Low usage of renewable energy sources	
Communications	Guarantee the people access at the lowest possible cost to postal, telephone, and information and communications technology (ICT) services		Strengthen the institutional and legal framework of the post and telecommunications sector
		Weakness of the institutional and legal framework of the post and telecommunications sector	
		Limited postal service	
		Landline telephone network extremely limited and unreliable	
	Post and telecommunications	High cost of communications with mobile telephones	Restore the sector of accessible postal services and develop landline telephony
		Limited Internet development	
		Absence of implementing provisions for laws in the communications sector	
		Inadequate media capacities (aged buildings and technical equipment, insufficiently qualified staff)	
		Insufficient radio and television coverage of national territory	
	Communications and ICT		Devise and apply a national ICT policy
	Strengthen the institutional and legal framework		Strengthen the institutional and legal framework
	Improve national media coverage		Improve national media coverage
	Install the government's, departments' and communes' intranet and extranet network		Install the government's, departments' and communes' intranet and extranet network

Area	General objective	Problems	Specific objectives
Meteorology	Facilitate the development of applied research in meteorology and operational hydrography for purposes of improving the quality of life and security of the people	<p>Affiliation of the meteorological service with the air transport authorities only</p> <p>Scant development of applied research in meteorology and operational hydrography</p> <p>Poor qualification level of aging staff</p> <p>Outdated technical equipment</p>	<p>Enhance the awareness of the personnel categories exposed and make better use of the media to combat HIV/AIDS</p> <p>Increase understanding of climatic factors on the part of those working in areas such as tourism, agriculture, construction and public works, and air, sea, and river navigation, as well as health</p> <p>Promote research</p> <p>Strengthen the capacities of the staff in charge of managing meteorological resources</p> <p>Improve meteorological equipment</p> <p>Strengthen bilateral and multilateral technical cooperation</p>
Private sector			
Private sector	Increase private sector participation in the production of national wealth	<p>Dilapidation of basic infrastructures: transport, electricity, communications</p> <p>Inefficiency of the judicial system</p> <p>Poorly adapted regulatory and tax system</p> <p>Weakness of support structures for SMEs/SMIs</p> <p>Limited access to financing</p> <p>Inadequate managerial capacities</p> <p>Underdeveloped industries</p> <p>Environment not favorable to efficiency and competitiveness</p>	<p>Increase the potential for attracting foreign direct investment</p> <p>Promote national entrepreneurship</p> <p>Enhance support, management, and industrial promotion capacities</p> <p>Enhance productive capacities in priority areas</p> <p>Promote cleaner industrial units</p> <p>Rehabilitate the business environment</p> <p>Build human and institutional capacities</p> <p>Build capacities in the area of defining trade policies and strategies and in trade negotiations (WTO, APE, CEMAC, CEEAC)</p>
Industry	Develop a national industrial sector		
Commerce	Develop trade in goods and services within the country and abroad	<p>Failure to observe regulations</p> <p>Limited supervisory capacities in the sector</p> <p>Low degree of national participation in sub-regional trade</p>	
Banking and finance	Permit the short-, medium-, and long-term financing of economic activities and access to credit on the part of low-income households	<p>Deterioration, narrowness, and lack of diversification of the banking sector</p> <p>Low degree of participation in financing the national economy</p> <p>Supply of short-term loans at high interest rates</p> <p>Absence of a sectoral policy and strategy</p> <p>Risk aversion on the part of operators in the sector</p> <p>Lack of skills in the area of attracting and managing savings</p> <p>Lack of understanding of the basic texts on microfinance by promoters and those responsible for supervision</p> <p>Risk aversion on the part of operators in the sector</p>	<p>Promote the assumption of equity interests in existing corporations and those being created on the part of financial and insurance establishments</p> <p>Introduce an environment conducive to the creation of financial establishments specialized in long-term lending</p> <p>Promote a policy on credit to low-income individuals</p> <p>Build human capacities</p>
Sub-regional integration			

Area	General objective	Problems	Specific objectives
Technical and vocational education	Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of technical and vocational education	Lack of infrastructure and equipment	Build human and institutional capacities
		Aging staff with inadequate retraining	
		Weakness of partnership with the world of work and related sectors	Develop apprenticeship training in the trades
		Mismatch between training and real needs	Introduce new training programs using the skills-based approach, and define the related instructional materials
		Insufficient collaboration between the technical education institutions and the user ministries	Develop partnerships between the training institutions and the user administrations, parapublic establishments, and enterprises, as well as with institutions abroad
Literacy	Reduce illiteracy and functional illiteracy	Lack of literacy training centers	Develop and apply a national literacy policy
Civic instruction/moral education	Promote civic instruction and moral education	Absence of a national policy on civic and moral instruction	Develop and apply a policy on civic instruction and moral education in the education system
Higher education	Pass on high-level scientific and technical knowledge	Inadequate infrastructures, equipment, and social infrastructures	Enhance institutional and human capacities
		Shortage of instructional personnel	
		Inadequate operating budget	
		Absence of appropriations for research	
		Concentration of higher education institutions in Brazzaville	Deconcentrate higher education
		Inadequate professionalization of instructional programs	Bring programs into line with international standards, including the BMD (Bachelor's-Master's-Doctorate) system
		Gender imbalance in student population	Reduce disparities between women and men at the university level
Scientific research and technological innovation	Pass on high-level scientific and technical knowledge of practical value	Poor structuring of research at the level of institutions under the auspices of the General Delegation for Scientific and Technological Research	
		Failure to apply Law 15-95 on the promotion of research	Implement the scientific policy on research and innovation in accordance with Law 15-95
		Lack of attractive status for researchers	
		Deteriorated and outdated infrastructures and equipment	Strengthen institutional, material, and human capacities
		Glaring shortage of researchers at all levels, and aging personnel	
		Broken ties with institutions abroad and with local enterprises and industries	Develop partnerships with research institutes abroad and with local enterprises and industries
		Absence of linkage between research and the productive environment	
Culture and the arts	Promote culture and the arts as a key link in sustainable development	Absence of public research, military research, or laboratories in the state enterprises	
		Absence of any policy in the area of culture and the arts	Strengthen the institutional framework in the area of culture and the arts
		Failure to ratify a number of international conventions and texts on the promotion of culture	
		Lack of appropriate structures for the preservation and protection of the cultural heritage	Promote culture and protect the cultural heritage
		Insufficient training of the artists and leaders in cultural	

Area	General objective	Problems	Specific objectives
		infrastructures	
Sports	Promote elite and mass sports	Lack of a sports policy Limited participation in sports by the people Weakness of national coverage with sports facilities and equipment, especially in the schools and universities Poor management capacity at all levels of the system	Promote local arts Develop a national sports policy Improve managerial capacities and sport and administrative infrastructures
Health	Improve the state of health of the population, and that of women and children in particular	Inadequate informational support for managing the health system and decision-making Mismatch of human, technical, material, and financial resources to needs Poor quality of health care and health services Limited availability of essential and generic drugs and other consumables in health units Insufficient community participation in the management of the health system and it in its own health Poor access to health services on the part of at-risk groups Inadequate information reaching the people as regards the problems associated with maternal health; for example, women and their families have a poor understanding of the warning signs during pregnancy and the appropriate steps to take Inadequacy of structures offering obstetric and neonatal care, basic emergency obstetrical care, and complete emergency obstetrical care Shortcomings in terms of the quality and quantity of qualified personnel Prohibitive cost of maternal, neonatal, and infant care in terms of household purchasing power Inadequate basic material and equipment in local health units Lack of ongoing training of staff No staff motivation efforts Weakness of the information system on mother and child health	Bolster the leadership, management, and operational capacities of a decentralized health system Introduce an efficient system of managing human resources in the health system Introduce an efficient human resource management system for the health sector Improve access to the core package of quality health care and services (PESS)
Food security			
Food and nutritional security	Meet the needs of the people for quality food	Inadequate availability of food associated with low local agro-pastoral and fisheries production, low incomes, the absence of a culture of preservation, processing, and storing foodstuffs, and the seasonality of product availability Lack of knowledge about nutritional considerations on the part of the general public and recourse to customary food patterns deemed inappropriate	Improve access to quality food Improve parents' knowledge and practices in respect of nutrition

Area	General objective	Problems	Specific objectives
Water and sanitation			
Water	Improve the people's access to safe drinking water	Water supply to the people is inexplicably inconsistent with the country's potential Inadequate resources for water quality control Existing installations are insufficient, out of date, and in poor condition Poor coverage in urban areas, with frequent outages Insufficient water points in rural areas Inadequate sanitation works and services	Improve the governance of water Enhance capacities for the quantitative and qualitative control of water Improve access to safe drinking water in rural and urban areas
Sanitation	Contribute to improving the living conditions of the people		Disseminate appropriate low-cost techniques for managing human waste Develop collective urban systems for evacuating waste water and rain water Enhance the operational capacities of public hygiene units and local governments as regards the management of human waste, waste water, and rain water
Housing			
Housing	Enable the greatest possible number to have suitable living conditions and housing	The high degree of urbanization in the country has led to uncontrolled expansion of the major urban centers Limited intervention of the private sector in the promotion of property development Housing shortage Limited financial capacities of the State property company Absence of mechanisms and institutions for housing finance Low production capacities for production of local construction materials High cost of construction materials Institutional dysfunctions in urban management Failure to observe housing construction standards	Improve the institutional and legal framework Establish housing finance mechanisms Develop production units and promote the use of local construction materials Enhance the capacities of State services and local governments Attend to the observance and application of housing construction standards
Axis 4: Improvement of social environment and integration of at-risk groups			
Social protection	Extend social protection to the entire population	The most vulnerable population groups do not benefit from solidarity measures, nor are their fundamental rights protected There is limited scope for applying social protection measures Narrow range of services available Lack of medical insurance or solidarity measures for the unemployed or for destitute persons Poor management of social protection structures	Devise and implement a new social security policy Create social security coverage categories that serve the majority of, if not the entire, population Promote good governance of the social protection structures Enhance institutional capacities of the governmental and non-

Area	General objective	Problems	Specific objectives
Jobs and working conditions	Expand employment and improve working conditions		governmental structures
			Promote non-governmental structures
		Lack of a national employment policy	Devise and implement a national employment policy
		Limited possibilities for job creation in the public sector	
		Underdeveloped private enterprises	Support for job creation in the private sector
		Undervaluation of agro-pastoral and crafts work	Promote heavily labor-intensive activities
		Lack of a mechanism for promoting qualified training	
		Legislation does not cover some sub-sectors	Improve the legislative and regulatory framework
Childhood	Create a protective environment that can guarantee the survival, development, and well-being of children	Lax compliance with the labor code	
		Poorly defined "Employers-Workers" concertation framework	Organize the institutional framework for employer/worker relations
		Weak organization of employers (professional organizations, GIE, etc.)	
		Nonexistent medical services at work	
		Limited recognition of professional risks	Improve attention to the health and professional risks of workers in the public and private sectors
		Weak application of the legal provisions relating to the rights of children, women, and minorities	Promote and apply the conventions, charters, and laws relating to the protection of children
		Exploitation of children (work, prostitution, child soldiers)	
		Lack of civil status recording of many children	Simplify the administrative procedures for registering births and ensure that this is free of charge
		Significant malnutrition among children in urban and rural areas	Promote and provide incentives for improving basic social services for children
		High child morbidity and mortality owing to infectious and parasitic diseases	
		Poor conditions in basic education	
		Early sexual activity exposing children to multiple risks	Improve the care provided for children at risk
Special education	Improve access to education on the part of children living with handicaps	Limited care for at-risk children (street children, child soldiers, victims of child prostitution, children in trouble with the law, orphans and vulnerable children, etc.)	
		Limited care in the context of prevention of and treatment for children infected with/affected by HIV/AIDS	Reduce the vulnerability of children to HIV/AIDS, prevent the infection of children, and promote the right to care for ill children who have been infected or affected
		Insufficient training structures, specialized equipment, and adequate human and financial resources	Enhance institutional and human capacities in the area of special education
		Poor attention to the education of the handicapped	
		Lack of a national youth policy	Devise and implement a national youth policy
		Nonexistence of implementing regulations for Law 9-2000 of July 31, 2000 on youth	
		High unemployment among the young	Revitalize the youth employment policy
		Increases in deviant behaviors: robbery, theft, rape, promiscuity, prostitution, drugs	Promote combating deviant behavior among youths
		Lack of recreational possibilities	
		Early sexuality with dramatic consequences (increase in unwanted pregnancies, numerous abortions, many child	Develop information, education, and communication mechanisms on responsible sexuality aimed at the young
Youth	Reduce the vulnerability of youths with a view to their social and economic integration		

Area	General objective	Problems	Specific objectives
Indigenous peoples and other minorities	Promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples and other minorities	mothers abandoned, many children abandoned)	Improve care for child mothers and abandoned children
		High prevalence of STDs and HIV/AIDS among the young	Bolster the prevention of HIV/AIDS among youths
		Non-ratification of the African Youth Charter	Promote the African Youth Charter
		Absence of a policy on the social protection of minorities	Draw up and apply a policy on the social protection of minority groups
		Non-inclusion in civil status records	Implement special rights and promote additional measures for the promotion of minorities
		Marginalization	Improve access to basic social services on the part of indigenous peoples
		Poor access to basic social services	
		Stigmatization	
			Tap the knowledge and know-how of indigenous peoples as regards environmental protection
Axis 5: Combating HIV/AIDS			
HIV/AIDS	Reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among the population	Inadequate prevention	Intensify prevention efforts at the community level, in the workplace, and in care facilities
		Insufficient transfusion security	
		Weak arrangements and capacities for attending to medical, psychological, and nutritional needs	Improve the overall care of infected and affected persons
		Limited availability of ARVs, consumables, and reagents	Improve the supply and distribution of ARVs and consumables
		Weakness of the monitoring and evaluation and epidemiological surveillance system	Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation and epidemiological surveillance system
		Limited concertation among stakeholders in the fight against HIV/AIDS	Strengthen public/private partnerships and civil society
		Persistence of discrimination against and stigmatization of persons living with HIV/AIDS	
		Higher exposure to HIV/AIDS in some environments: education, law enforcement, agricultural and forestry workers, transportation	Memorandum item: see areas concerned

ANNEX III: Strategies and actions matrix

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
Goal 1: Improve governance and consolidate peace and security				
Political governance				
Political governance	Promote sound political practices, individual liberties, and independence of the media	Upgrade the material and human capacities of constitutional institutions so they can fulfill their role	Upgrading of the material and human capacities of constitutional institutions so they can fulfill their role	Organize training programs for constitutional institutions Technical, material, and financial support
		Strengthen the culture of democracy and peace	Strengthening of the culture of democracy and peace	Systematize Parliament's controls over government action
		Establish a quota policy for women for all appointments and slates of candidates	Establishment of a quota policy for women for all appointments and slates of candidates	Organize awareness-raising campaigns on civil, economic, social, and political rights and the role of Parliamentarians Produce communication kits on civil rights and the culture of democracy
		Improve governance of political parties and civil society organizations	Improvement of governance of political parties and civil society organizations	Incorporate lessons on governance in school curricula
		Assure the freedom and independence of the media	Assurance of the freedom and independence of the media	Implement the quota policy for women in government and elective positions
		Implement mechanisms to finalize the legal framework and build stakeholder capacities	Implementation of mechanisms to finalize the legal framework and build stakeholder capacities	Put the finishing touches to the legal framework regulating the activities of political parties and associations
				Provide technical and financial support to political parties and associations
				Provide technical and financial support to the media
				Train media professionals
				Create the conditions for enforcing the statutes on freedom of the media
Decentralization	Promote local development through a concomitant transfer of skills and resources (human, material, and financial) to elected local authorities	Implement mechanisms to finalize the legal framework and build stakeholder capacities	Implementation of mechanisms to finalize the legal framework and build stakeholder capacities	Adopt implementing statutes and publicize them widely through decentralization seminars
		Prepare statutes and create mechanisms for citizen participation in local affairs and establishment of the territorial civil service	Preparation of statutes and creation of mechanisms for citizen participation in local affairs and establishment of the territorial civil service	Organize training sessions for deconcentrated and decentralized government employees
		Implement local government budget and tax reforms	Implementation of local government budget and tax reforms	Promote participatory democracy
				Complete the development and adoption of statutes on recruitment and career paths of territorial civil servants
				Set up the appropriate bodies and proceed with the recruitment or reassignment of employees for the territorial civil service
				Promote local community management structures
				Develop, adopt, and publicize statutes on the standard presentation of local government budget and accounting records and procedures for the collection, distribution, and notification of local government receipts
				Train deconcentrated and decentralized government employees
				Guarantee growth and sustainability of the total investment appropriation

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
Balanced departmental and local development	Unify the country through balanced development	Develop infrastructure	Development of infrastructure	<p>Set in place a departmental and local service network to provide intra- and inter-departmental links (<i>government</i>)</p> <p>Ensure maintenance and rehabilitation of main roads, rivers, and feeder roads (<i>government and local authorities</i>)</p> <p>Proceed with electrification in the departmental and local context and promote renewable energies in rural areas (<i>government</i>)</p>
		Restructure the departmental and local economies	Restructuring of the departmental and local economies	<p>Set up local radio stations (<i>local authorities</i>)</p> <p>Promote local economic sectors:</p> <p>Promote activities related to the agriculture, agroforestry, fisheries and livestock, agroprocessing, water resources, and tourism sectors (<i>local authorities</i>)</p> <p>Organize supporting economic sectors:</p> <p>Create the conditions for development of the public and private services required for the local economy to run smoothly, especially in terms of training and technical and financial support</p> <p>Improve the trade networks to ensure an outlet for local products and a steady source of supply for residents and businesses (<i>local authorities</i>)</p>
		Structure urban and housing development in the departments	Structuring of urban and housing development in the departments	<p>Develop and implement town planning documents for urban and rural communities (master plans and local town planning) and departmental housing program documents, establish land occupancy authorizations, proceed with site development in urban and rural communities (<i>local authorities</i>)</p> <p>Promote balanced departmental and local development:</p> <p>Reinforce decentralized areas in order to improve residents' access to basic services and boost development of the economic fabric</p> <p>Redistribute basic services in each department taking into account the hierarchical levels of the local urban framework</p> <p>Implement the school map, the health map, and supporting services for economic activities so that catchment towns are clearly identified, along with the functions they are to play (<i>government and local authorities</i>)</p> <p>Promote real estate activity:</p> <p>Ensure the construction of public housing, set in place mechanisms to protect and rehabilitate public lands and government real estate (<i>local authorities</i>)</p>
		Institutionalize consultation at the departmental level	Institutionalization of consultation at the departmental level	<p>Group local stakeholders together and create departmental commissions for land use planning: (i) Departmental Poverty Reduction Committees (CDLPs); (ii) Local Poverty Reduction Committees; (iii) Interministerial Committee for Land Use Planning and Development (CIADT); (iv)</p>

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
Gender	Reduce gender inequalities by boosting the economic, social, cultural, and political power of women			National Council for Land Use Planning and Development (CNADT); (v) Departmental Land Use Planning Commissions (CDATs)
		Conserve the environment	Environmental conservation	Implement departmental program contracts (<i>government and local authorities</i>)
				Organize efforts to control pollution and bush fires, conserve ecosystems, and protect soils from erosion, landslides, and flooding (<i>local authorities</i>)
		Develop and implement a national gender policy	Development and implementation of a national gender policy	Develop departmental sites and parks (<i>local authorities</i>)
		Promote girl/boy parity in education and promote maternal health development	Promotion of girl/boy parity in education and promotion of maternal health development	Develop, adopt, and implement the gender policy and incorporate the gender approach in all policies and all ministry programs, projects, and budgets
		Promote fair representation and equal participation of women and men, girls and boys, in decision-making at all levels	Promotion of fair representation and equal participation of women and men, girls and boys, in decision-making at all levels	Provide advocacy and ensure that measures and steps are actually taken in the education and health fields
		Fight all forms of violence against women	Fight against all forms of violence against women	Provide advocacy and ensure rigorous enforcement of legal statutes
		Promote women's rights	Promotion of women's rights	Provide advocacy, ensure rigorous enforcement of all provisions of the criminal code pertaining to perpetrators of violence, and ensure that victim support structures are running smoothly
				Develop and implement an information, education, and communication program on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
				Publicize the statutes
Environment	Protect the environment on a sustainable basis by protecting the country's natural heritage and by using biodiversity resources in a rational manner			Revitalize the women's center and the center for research, information, and documentation on women and ensure capacity-building for women
		Improve the economic autonomy of women	Improvement of the economic autonomy of women	Train women and young mothers in small industries
				Provide support for income-generating activities and women's entrepreneurship (women's banks, training centers)
		Strengthen HIV/AIDS prevention and control for girls and women	Strengthening of HIV/AIDS prevention and control for girls and women	Implement an information, education, and communication program for behavioral change
		Upgrade stakeholder capacity to address environmental issues	Upgrading of stakeholder capacity to address environmental issues	Organize information, education, and communication campaigns on environmental issues
				Create a National Environmental Protection Agency, a National Sustainable Development Commission, and a Disaster Prevention and Control Center
				Ensure systematic attention to environmental issues in

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
		Implement air, water, and soil quality control systems	Implementation of air, water, and soil quality control systems	<p>projects</p> <p>Create a laboratory for air, water, and soil quality control and analysis</p> <p>Regulate noise, odors, and vibrations, including ionizing elements</p>
		Develop and implement a municipal, industrial, and medical waste management plan	Development and updating of municipal and biomedical waste management plans	<p>Develop household and industrial waste collection, removal, treatment, storage, elimination, and recycling systems</p> <p>Set up a system of public trash receptacles with appropriate means of transport</p> <p>Build authorized garbage dumps</p> <p>Establish regulations on the importation of non-biodegradable packaging</p>
		Implement an early warning and rapid response system for major and minor disasters (oil pollution, erosion, flooding, droughts, locust outbreaks, etc.)	Implementation of an early warning system for major and minor disasters (oil pollution, erosion, flooding, droughts, locust outbreaks, etc.)	<p>Develop plans that fit into the Hyogo action framework</p> <p>Set in place other appropriate means to provide information in the event of a disaster, for the purpose of rapid response</p> <p>Raise residents' awareness and prepare them to face the risks of disasters</p> <p>Establish awareness-raising maps</p> <p>Implement the National Emergency Response Plan for dealing with oil pollution</p> <p>Carry out specific development projects to control erosion in coastal zones and urban areas</p>
		Establish scientific monitoring to detect the voluntary or accidental introduction of invasive plant or animal species	Establishment of scientific monitoring to detect the voluntary or accidental introduction of invasive plant or animal species	<p>Step up research on controlling all introductions of plants or animals, the reproduction of which could threaten indigenous plant and animal species</p> <p>Conduct studies on plant species (water hyacinth, water lettuce, and water fern) that may endanger fish reproduction or obstruct navigable waterways, in order to identify biological and mechanical ways to eliminate them</p>
		Implement a noise pollution policy	Implementation of a noise pollution policy	<p>Develop and implement a noise pollution control plan that includes the following actions: (i) develop noise exposure mapping; (ii) set in place noise measurement stations; (iii) define noise discomfort evaluation tools; (iv) develop a code of proper behavior for those responsible for noise sources; (v) develop a law on noise pollution control; (vi) adopt a mechanism to require soundproofing of houses of worship; (vii) institute a tax on noise pollution based on the principle that polluters should pay; (viii) establish a high authority of noise pollution control; (ix) promote research on noise</p>
Peace and security				
Peace and security	Consolidate peace and security through good	Strengthen government authority	Stronger security to prevent conflict and build a lasting peace	Establish mechanisms to permit all citizens to guard against a lack of security, abuses of authority, and a lack of civic

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
	governance and a culture of peace, and guarantee the free movement of persons and goods			spirit on the part of armed forces
				Strengthen the territorial network by installing public security posts and territorial police units, with local resident involvement, to ensure local management of security
				Train police in democratic principles, respect for human rights, and regulations pertaining to migration
		Improve police capacities and military status	Improvement of police capacities and military status	Adopt a military programming law designed to improve police regulations, capacities, and integrity through training
				Rehabilitate and construct police offices and barracks
				Provide police with equipment, means of response, and other border control resources
				Strengthen the means of border control
				Conduct awareness-raising campaigns against drug use
				Continue to demobilize former combatants and promote their economic and social reintegration
				Promote the integration of child soldiers and disabled ex-combatants
				Continue to implement disarmament (prevent the remobilization of self-demobilized ex-combatants and also disarm holders of illegal weapons of war)
				Identify the women involved in and affected by armed conflict and develop a program to provide psychological, medical, and economic support
				See to enforcement of the peace accords and fine-tune the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program for former militia members
				See to enforcement of the peace accords and fine-tune the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program for currently active militia members
				Enforce the provisions of the criminal code pertaining to perpetrators of violence
			Upgrade centers that provide medical, health, and psychosocial support to women who are victims of violence and promote their socioeconomic reintegration	
			Implement a program of HIV/AIDS prevention and comprehensive coverage of infected and affected individuals	
Administrative and judicial governance				
Administrative and judicial governance	Improve the performance of public institutions in order to consolidate the rule of law and provide citizens with quality public services	Continue and complete the civil service reform	Continuation and completion of the civil service reform	Reform the legislative and regulatory system and develop related implementing statutes
				Establish a national commission on government reform
				Build operational capacities, particularly at the General Directorate of Government Reform, which will be restructured

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
Transparency, corruption, and fraud	Promote transparency and reduce corruption and fraud	Undertake the legal and judicial reform	Legal and judicial reform	Set up a single Pay/Civil Service/Police data base
		Promote knowledge of legal procedures and statutes	Promotion of knowledge of legal procedures and statutes	Reform the legal and judicial system
		Upgrade human capacities and administrative and penitentiary infrastructure	Upgrading of human capacities and administrative and penitentiary infrastructure	Bring commercial law in line with the OHADA treaty and build the capacities of the OHADA commission
		Upgrade the capacities of the national statistical system	Upgrading of the capacities of the national statistical system	Upgrade the capacities of commercial courts
		Strengthen transparency in the management of public affairs	Strengthening of transparency in the management of public affairs	Create or upgrade legal clinics
		Strengthen control mechanisms and promote reporting requirements	Strengthening of control mechanisms and promotion of reporting requirements	Translate national laws and international conventions into native languages
		Raise the government employee pay scale	Raising of the government employee pay scale	Organize IEC/CCC activities and training seminars for judges and society-at-large on human rights, especially women's rights
				Organize regular seminars, training workshops, and retraining sessions for civilian employees of the government
				Rehabilitate or build courts and prisons and equip them appropriately
				Create facilities for minors
Economic and financial governance	Improve the country's macroeconomic framework on a sustainable basis			Recruit and train CNSEE staff and management
				Upgrade computer and logistical equipment at CNSEE
				Provide CNSEE with the necessary financial resources to conduct surveys and disseminate the results
				Ensure coordination with sectoral statistical systems
				Make information available on the management of public affairs
				Build the technical capacities of government employees
				Systematically arrange for competitive bidding for government contracts
				Speed up the process of establishing the national watchdog agency to fight corruption
				Carry out a study on the determinants of corruption and fraud, disseminate rules of proper behavior to government employees and the public, and monitor enforcement of same
				Lift the wage reduction measure, revise the grading values, and gradually release financial paper based on advances and new wage scales
Set in place mechanisms to motivate honest employees				
Economic and financial governance	Improve the country's macroeconomic framework on a sustainable basis	Enhance the capacity to formulate development policies and strategies and manage reforms	Enhancement of the capacity to formulate development policies and strategies and manage reforms	Train and provide technical support to national experts in the formulation, execution, monitoring, oversight, and evaluation of development strategies and policies
				Implement methods and procedures for analyzing and selecting public investments
				Implement procedures and tools for monitoring public

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions	
				investments Establish a project study fund Ensure the development of sector strategies, especially for key sectors	
		Carry out the government finance reform	Government finance reform	Expand the tax base by taxing products and services not yet subject to taxation and by developing indirect taxes Streamline financial controls and procedures for government accounting Introduce and enforce rigorous methods to fight corruption and tax and customs fraud Streamline budget execution management and oversight mechanisms	
				Allocate adequate public resources based on priorities consistent with human development	
		Improve the management of government contracts	Improvement of the management of government contracts	Reform government contracting regulations and draw up manuals of procedures and terms and conditions Make the government contracts commission operational	
		Strengthen control mechanisms and promote reporting requirements	Strengthening of control mechanisms and promotion of reporting requirements	Organize training sessions on the budget process Upgrade the capacities of offices and institutions responsible for a priori and a posteriori oversight Make adequate resources available to Parliament, the Audit Office, and the judiciary for them to carry out various controls and function properly	
		Improve debt management	Improvement of debt management	Negotiate debt cancellation with preferential creditors Negotiate a moratorium (payment freeze) with the <i>Club de Paris</i> on settlement of debt due Examine opportunities for debt service relief Conduct definitive audits of internal debt Regularly monitor the government's floating debt and make plans to discharge same	
		Goal 2: Promote growth and macroeconomic stability			
		Growth sectors			
		Oil	Improve oil sector management in order to optimize the use of oil revenues for the development of other sectors	Optimize the share of crude reverting to the government Improve production and export controls Strengthen the legal framework, institutional capacities, and national expertise	Optimization of the share of crude reverting to the government Improvement of production and export controls Strengthening of the legal framework, institutional capacities, and national expertise

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
Forestry	Develop the sector through improved resource management and an expansion of on-site processing	<p>Improve the governance of oil resources and make their management transparent</p> <p>Promote subcontracting and strengthen local technical expertise</p> <p>Provide the entire country with a regular supply of petroleum products</p> <p>Expand refining capacities</p> <p>Require oil companies to take steps to treat waste and clean up areas already polluted</p> <p>Involve citizens in the sustainable and rational management of forest and wildlife resources</p> <p>Improve forest resources management</p>	<p>Improvement in the governance of oil resources and the transparency of their management</p> <p>Promotion of subcontracting and strengthening of local technical expertise</p> <p>Supply of petroleum products for residents throughout the country</p> <p>Expansion of refining capacities</p> <p>Pollution mitigation and attention to waste treatment by oil companies</p> <p>Involvement of citizens in the sustainable and rational management of forest and wildlife resources</p> <p>Improvement of forest resources management</p>	<p>including those related to surveillance, record keeping, data management, and information procedures, especially in regard to management of the Djeno terminal</p> <p>Strengthen oil sector taxation</p> <p>Develop a medium-term training program, based on contractual training budgets, for operational strengthening of the General Directorate of Oil and the Oil Unit at the Ministry of Economy, Finance, and Budget</p> <p>Institute a policy to strengthen national expertise and train actors from civil society and the press</p> <p>Set in place an institutional framework to support the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), bringing together operators involved in mining activities, civil society, and government officials, and improve SNPC management</p> <p>Prepare implementing statutes for the law on subcontracting and improve the capacities of sector officials through appropriate training</p> <p>Provide the entire country with a regular and adequate supply of petroleum products</p> <p>Modernize CORAF and gradually reduce government subsidies to the fuel sector</p> <p>Adopt statutes in line with international regulations on pollution ratified by Congo which would require oil companies that produce polluting waste to clean up polluted areas and perform proper treatment of production-related waste</p> <p>Develop and implement forest and wildlife resources co-management mechanisms with local populations</p> <p>Develop and implement a system to recover and pass along to local populations a portion of the forestry taxes</p> <p>Support the implementation of forestry concession certification mechanisms and oversight arrangements</p> <p>Implement the priority actions of the national convergence plan within the context of a Forestry/Environment Sector Program (PSFE)</p> <p>Promote certification of forestry revenues collected by the Treasury</p> <p>Retrain active personnel and upgrade their skills</p> <p>Implement the national forestry inventory program; develop, adopt, and execute management plans in all forestry concessions and develop criteria and indicators for forestry operations</p> <p>Implement strategic tools: zoning of government</p>

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
Agriculture, livestock, and fisheries	<p>Boost agro-pastoral, aquacultural, and fisheries output in order to reduce dependency and achieve food security</p> <p><i>Agriculture</i></p>			forestlands, forest mapping, land use mapping
				Set up a management structure for protected areas nationwide
		Promote the enforcement of regulations	Enforcement of forestry regulations	See to the development of ecotourism activities in protected areas and fight deforestation
		Fight the fraudulent exploitation and illegal trade of forest and wildlife products	Fight against the fraudulent exploitation and illegal trade of forest and wildlife products	Enforce the provisions of the new forestry code, particularly in regard to implementation of the forest development process and rigorous compliance with international agreements ratified by the country
		Develop local processing and promote the involvement of local businesses in the wood industry	Forest product development, processing, marketing, and promotion	Enhance remote sensing techniques and geographic information systems to assist in the oversight of forestry regulations
		Strengthen the fight against HIV/AIDS among sector workers and neighboring populations	Strengthening of the fight against HIV/AIDS among sector workers and neighboring populations	Speed up the process of establishing a paramilitary body and proceed with widespread expansion of Surveillance and Anti-Poaching Units (USLABs)
				Recruit and train eco-guards
				Develop the master plan for industrialization of the wood industry and conduct a study on existing wood processing
				Promote the involvement of nationals in wood processing and marketing
				Take measures aimed at the expansion, diversification, processing, and promotion of consumption of Congolese wood
				Implement a program of HIV/AIDS prevention and comprehensive coverage of infected and affected individuals
		Implement a national agricultural policy	Implementation of the national agricultural policy	Implement the national agricultural policy
		Create conditions conducive to production	Creation of conditions conducive to production	Proceed with agricultural mechanization
		Develop storage and processing infrastructure for agricultural products	Creation of conditions conducive to processing and marketing	Distribute improved seeds
				Promote agricultural micro-loans and other financing arrangements
				Provide support to agricultural research centers
				Establish technical schools in line with specific needs at the departmental level
				Revitalize entities charged with collecting statistical data
				Build storage and preservation facilities as well as markets of local and departmental interest
				Inform operators about processing and preservation

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
Livestock	Develop environmentally sound agriculture		Control of imports and local manipulation of genetically modified organisms (GMOs)	techniques
				Establish a surveillance mechanism for imports and genetic manipulation of plants and animals with the intent to place organic products on the market in order to achieve food security (public health and food quality)
				Promote the use of cultivars that are less dependent on pesticides
	Develop and implement a national livestock policy	Adopt incentive measures for creating livestock operations, set in place pastoralist support structures, and develop the veterinary sector	Development and implementation of a new livestock policy	Develop and implement a national livestock policy
				Promote efforts to supply sector producers with good genetic material
				Develop sharecropping
				Promote livestock feed
				Promote technical support centers
				Provide support for revitalized pastoral research
				Establish technical schools
Fisheries		Promote livestock product preservation, processing, and marketing facilities	Creation of conditions conducive to the processing and marketing of livestock products	Revitalize entities charged with collecting statistical data
				Promote livestock health coverage
				Build slaughter and storage facilities as well as markets of local and departmental interest
				Develop processing and preservation techniques
				Create the conditions for development of a true livestock product processing industry
				Train and retrain extension workers and field staff
				Improve the working conditions
				Develop and implement a national fisheries policy
				Make the legal framework more attractive and appropriate by adopting implementing decrees for the law on maritime fisheries and the laws and regulations on continental fisheries and aquaculture
				Support maritime and continental fishing and aquaculture communities
	Develop expertise in the fisheries sector	Develop halieutic and aquacultural activities	Promotion of halieutic and aquacultural activities	Establish and strengthen partnership with non-governmental stakeholders in the sector
				Build the managerial and operational capacities of fisheries and aquaculture officials and stakeholders
				Create basic sector infrastructure and facilities to support the marketing of fishery and aquaculture products
				Establish a national quality assurance system for fishery and aquaculture products
				Promote experimentation with fishery, aquaculture, preservation, and processing techniques
				Promote training and research and development

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
Mining		Promote sustainable halieutic and aquacultural production	Development and promotion of sustainable aquacultural production	Set in place a statistical information system Encourage maritime and continental fishery and aquaculture choices that permit regeneration of halieutic resources and reduce the erosion of species Improve the monitoring and evaluation of resources and the surveillance and protection of the exclusive economic zone and continental waters
		Intensify the fight against HIV/AIDS on behalf of farmers, pastoralists, and fishermen, with special emphasis on the fisheries sector	Intensification of the fight against HIV/AIDS on behalf of farmers, pastoralists, and fishermen, with special emphasis on the continental fisheries sector	Implement a program of HIV/AIDS prevention and comprehensive coverage of infected and affected farmers, fishermen, and pastoralists
		Improve the existing legal framework	Improvement of the existing legal framework	Adopt implementing decrees for the mining code
		Upgrade human and material capacities in the sector	Upgrading of human and material capacities in the sector	Develop and implement the mining sector master plan
Tourism	Promote mining activity	Coordinate the development of small-scale mining: gold washing and diamond washing	Coordination of the development of small-scale mining	Upgrade the operational capacities of the mining authority
		Promote national mining resources	Promotion of national mining resources	Organize small-scale mining operations and the precious minerals industries
		Establish an appropriate legal and institutional framework	Establishment of an appropriate legal and institutional framework	Develop knowledge of the Congolese soil and subsoil based on a mining master plan, and by conducting geological studies and producing mining maps
		Upgrade tourist accommodation and human capacities	Upgrading of tourist accommodation and human capacities	Develop facilities to perform analyses Organize seminars on Congo's tourism policy and rehabilitation of the High Council on Tourism; prepare a tourism development master plan
		Promote ecologically viable tourism	Promotion of ecologically viable tourism	Improve management of the national tourism development fund Create attractive sites for hosting FESPAM
				Encourage training of hotel and tourism sector employees Improve access to protected areas
Crafts	Promote crafts			Rehabilitate existing property Develop the new sites identified
		Continue and complete the reforms	Continuation and completion of the reforms	Institute a mechanism to promote all tourism sites Revise the legal statutes establishing public support facilities, specifically so as to make them true support centers through ANA and ADPME
		Upgrade craftsmen's technical and professional capacities	Upgrading of craftsmen's technical and professional capacities	Structure trade associations and revitalize trade sections within consular offices and craftsmen's associations See to implementation and expansion of the COSAME program in trade associations through craftsmen's guild missions
				Rehabilitate school workshops

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
		Promote handicraft activities	Promotion of handicraft activities	<p>Increase investment credits</p> <p>Establish a handicrafts gallery (physical and virtual) and craftsmen's villages</p> <p>Strive for handicraft product protection and compliance with standards</p> <p>Stimulate the development of central offices charged with collection, input purchases, transport, marketing, storage, conditioning, and establishment of a raw materials sales network</p>
Growth support sectors				
Transportation	Guarantee safe and secure movement of persons and goods nationwide	Implement measures common to different modes of transport	Implementation of measures common to different modes of transport	<p>Organize a round table of donors on PNT financing to ensure effective implementation on a partnership basis</p> <p>Expand network linkages throughout the country to achieve interdepartmental integration and promote healthy competition and intermodal coordination</p>
		Guarantee compliance with transport infrastructure construction standards	Enforcement and rigorous oversight of infrastructure construction standards	Guarantee rigorous compliance with transport infrastructure construction standards
		Improve the security of movements of persons and goods	Improvement in the security of movements of persons and goods	Improve the security conditions for movements of persons and goods by road, rail, and river
	<i>Road transport</i>	Improve road transport	Improvement of road transport	Continue and complete paving work on the main roads (RN1 and RN2 and other national and departmental roads)
				Open new earth roads
				Ensure maintenance of existing paved and unpaved roads
				Define the financing arrangements for paving and maintaining urban roads
				Encourage the creation of road transport companies
				Increase vehicle inspection capacities
				Increase road maintenance capacities by strengthening the roads authority and encouraging the creation of private businesses
				Make the road fund function better through effective implementation of transfer mechanisms and rational use of resources
				Rehabilitate track, stations, and the maintenance workshop
				Upgrade traction and transport equipment
	<i>Rail transport</i>	Improve CFCO operations	Improvement of CFCO operations	Gradually replenish staff
				Restart the CFCO privatization process and, in particular, its placement under a concession
	<i>River transport</i>	Improve river transport	Improvement of river transport	Ensure maintenance of navigable waterways and harbor waters
				Rehabilitate river port infrastructure
				Facilitate the acquisition of river transport equipment
				Ensure river surveillance and fight pollution

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
Power	<i>Maritime transport</i>	Improve maritime transport	Improvement of maritime transport	Rehabilitate, upgrade, and modernize PAPN port facilities Provide PAPN with necessary dredging equipment Institute the Cargo Early Information System (SIAM) and the Central African Interstate Transit System (TIPAC) Ensure maritime surveillance and fight marine pollution, as well as coastal erosion
	<i>Air transport</i>	Improve air transport and air safety and security	Improvement of air transport and air safety and security	Improve the infrastructure of the main airports Guarantee the safety and security of air traffic Create the conditions for acquisition of reliable aircraft
		Intensify the fight against HIV/AIDS in the sector	Intensification of the fight against HIV/AIDS in the sector	Implement an HIV/AIDS awareness-raising and prevention program aimed at operators, users, and communities located along air corridors, at stopover points, and in strategic transport areas
	Supply the country with power that is adequate in terms of quality and quantity and affordable to all	Upgrade power production, carrying, and distribution capacities	Upgrading of power production, carrying, and distribution capacities	Rehabilitate production infrastructure and build new power plants, hydroelectric micro-plants, and gas turbines Rehabilitate existing carrying and distribution infrastructure Increase the density of distribution grids in urban areas in order to facilitate residents' access to the grids
		Intensify rural electrification	Intensification of rural electrification	Develop and implement a national rural electrification program Build rural electrification lines linked to the interconnected national grid Provide isolated rural centers with hydroelectric pico-plants, photovoltaic solar panels, or any other source of renewable energy Ensure that responsibility for managing and running rural facilities is transferred to decentralized communities
		Complete the sector reform	Completion of the sector reform	Establish rural electrification regulatory agencies and the power sector development fund Develop and implement the sector policy strategy paper Reform the public operator, the National Power Company (SNE)
Communications	Provide citizens with affordable access to postal and telephone service and information and communication technologies (ITC)	Develop renewable energy resources	Development of renewable energy resources	Update inventories of sites identified for producing power from non-polluting sources In very isolated forest areas, promote co-generation using waste produced by wood-processing industries
		Improve the institutional and legal framework of the post and telecommunications	Improvement of the institutional and legal framework of the post	Adjust the current regulatory authority in line with sector developments

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
Meteorology	<i>Communications and ITC</i>	telecommunications sector	and telecommunications sector	
		Restore local postal service and develop landline telephone service	Restoration of local postal service and landline telephone service	Rehabilitate, equip, and modernize post offices Redeploy staff to all post offices Revise the system for introducing landline telephone service
		Develop and implement a flexible policy in regard to ITC	Development and implementation of a flexible policy in regard to ITC	Promote the acquisition of modern, high-performance equipment Promote computers and the Internet and proceed with the underwater cable connection Adopt implementing decrees for the laws in effect
		Improve the institutional and legal framework of the communications sector	Improvement of the institutional and legal framework of the communications sector	
		Strengthen information-producing organizations	Strengthening of information-producing organizations	Expand the human and material capacities of press and communications agencies and organizations
		Improve national media coverage	Improvement of national media coverage	Upgrade radio and television transmitters to improve their operational capacity and performance Add new radio and television relay stations, as well as local community channels Promote a non-stereotypical image of women through training for media professionals
		Implement the intranet and extranet network for government, departments, and municipalities	Implementation of the intranet and extranet network for government, departments, and municipalities	Support good governance by interconnecting national and local government entities
		Raise awareness on the part of employees and optimize use of the media for HIV/AIDS prevention and control	Intensification of HIV/AIDS prevention and control	Intensify HIV/AIDS prevention and control through Information, Education, and Communication/Communication for Behavior Change (IEC/CCC) campaigns, using TICs, radio and television, brochures, leaflets, etc.
		Enhance the attention given to climatic factors in areas such as tourism, agriculture, construction and public works, air, sea, and river traffic, and health	Enhancement of the attention given to climatic factors in areas such as tourism, agriculture, construction and public works, air, sea, and river traffic, and health	Establish a partnership with the specialized United Nations institution for meteorology and related sciences
		Promote research	Promotion of research	Create a center for research and research applications which will have as its mission to coordinate activities focusing on the production and exchange of information on the weather, water, and climate in accordance with international standards
		Improve the capacities of agents in charge of managing meteorological resources	Improvement of the capacities of agents in charge of managing meteorological resources	Train staff to bring them up to internationally recognized standards and, within the context of partnerships with specialized institutions, organize training activities to ensure a transfer of skills and the development of local expertise
		Improve meteorological equipment	Improvement of meteorological	Acquire high-performance equipment to expand coverage

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
		Strengthen bilateral and multilateral technical cooperation	equipment Strengthening of bilateral and multilateral technical cooperation	and improve its quality Continue technical cooperation with organizations in charge of issues of assistance to navigation and meteorology
Private sector				
Private sector	Increase private sector participation in the formation of national wealth	Increase the potential attractiveness of direct foreign investment Promote national entrepreneurship	Increase in the potential attractiveness of direct foreign investment Promotion of national entrepreneurship	Speed up institutional and structural reforms Upgrade the financial system Strengthen private sector support mechanisms Establish a legal and institutional framework that provides incentives for SME/SMIs, craftsmen, and cooperative entrepreneurship Provide technical and financial support to SME/SMIs, craftsmen, and cooperative entrepreneurship Create a national business assistance fund Promote the development of training courses on how to start a business
Industry	Develop a national industrial sector	Upgrade industrial support, management, and promotion capacities Increase the productive capacity in key areas	Upgrading of industrial support, management, and promotion capacities Increase in the productive capacity in key areas	Implement specific accompanying and incentive measures aimed at improving the national industrial environment in general, and the environment within each department in particular Establish industrial development zones in each department Strengthen the capacities of institutions and the support mechanisms for industrial development Strengthen the public sector/private sector/civil society partnership to promote, harmonize, and make full use of initiatives in all sectors involved in the management of industrial activities Harmonize and make full use of initiatives in all sectors involved in the management of industrial activities See to targeted integration of key industries in line with industrial sector and market needs Institute mechanisms for cleaner industrial production and systematize environmental impact studies Set in place commercial protection instruments, regulate the distribution function based on product type, and design a new pricing policy Develop rules of competition and the legal framework for consumer protection Intensify the fight against counterfeiting and smuggling Build basic commercial infrastructure Train employees in the areas of monitoring and trade negotiations Computerize ministry units and link them in a network Improve the mobility of field units
Trade	Develop trade in goods and services both within the country and without	Promote cleaner industrial operations Improve the business environment Upgrade human and institutional capacities	Promotion of cleaner industrial operations Improvement of the business environment Upgrading of human and institutional capacities	

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
		Upgrade capacities in the areas of trade policy and strategy development and trade negotiations (WTO, APE, CEMAC, CEEAC)	Upgrading of capacities in the areas of trade policy and strategy development and trade negotiations (WTO, APE, CEMAC, CEEAC, etc.)	Improve extension services for nationals engaged in retail and local trade Institute a trade information network
Banking and finance	Promote short, medium, and long-term financing of economic activities and access to credit for low-income households	Create an environment conducive to the emergence of financial institutions specializing in long-term credit Promote financial institutions' and insurance companies' equity interests in existing or newly forming companies Upgrade human capacities Promote a credit policy for low-income persons	Creation of an environment conducive to the emergence of financial institutions specializing in long-term credit Promotion of financial institutions' and insurance companies' equity interests in existing or newly forming companies Upgrading of human capacities Promotion of a credit policy for low-income persons	Institute long-term loan guarantee mechanisms Create a conducive environment for setting up investment banks Establish a framework of consultation Upgrade the capacities of financial institutions Create and develop nongovernmental support structures Create appropriate training centers to support projects aimed at building the capacities of business managers and developers Develop and implement an MFI incentive policy Raise women's awareness regarding the use of microfinance institutions
Subregional integration				
Subregional integration	Contribute to a deepening of the integration process	Deepen integration and economic opening Develop transportation and communications infrastructure and other ways to reduce isolation Diversify productive entities and develop the private sector Develop human resource capacities Reinforce macroeconomic stability	Deepening of integration and economic opening Development of transportation and communications infrastructure and other ways to reduce isolation Diversification of productive entities and development of the private sector Development of human resource capacities Reinforcement of macroeconomic stability	Implement a customs union and necessary instruments to clarify regional integration Simplify customs procedures within CEMAC Strengthen multilateral surveillance Develop community solidarity Rehabilitate and develop road and river corridors while taking into account the specific features of coastal versus landlocked countries Improve the business climate in the CEMAC zone Promote local processing of agricultural, pastoral, and mineral resources Develop the interdependencies between different productive activities Develop scientific and technological training Promote innovation by taking into account the needs of all economic and social sectors Promote the establishment of poles of excellence Speed up tax reforms so as to reduce the large relative proportion of customs receipts in budgetary revenue Strengthen the subregional macroeconomic convergence program

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
		Improve governance	Improvement of governance	Upgrade the human, institutional, and material capacities of government agencies in order to facilitate CEMAC's integration in the world economy Strengthen the rule of law, the quality of government agencies, the effectiveness of the government, the fight against corruption, and civil society capacities Promote decentralization as an innovative approach to governance at the subregional level in order to build capital in CEMAC and CEEAC
Goal 3: Improve access to high-quality basic social services				
Education				
Basic and secondary education	Guarantee school-age children's access to high-quality basic education	Upgrade the human, infrastructure, and equipment capacities of the education system	Upgrading of the human, infrastructure, and equipment capacities of the education system	Recruit and retrain teachers Rehabilitate deteriorated infrastructure and construct new buildings Provide schools with texts and teaching materials
		Improve sector management	Improvement of sector management	Regulate private teachers Implement the school map and adhere to the principle of equity between rural and urban areas in teacher assignments Computerize system management
		Improve the quality of services and teaching conditions	Improvement of the quality of services and teaching conditions	Improve working and study conditions (reduce the average class size, lower the proportion of support staff in schools, gradually eliminate volunteer teachers, improve the school environment)
		Improve social services: boarding, school meals, water points, latrines, school health services	Improvement of social services: boarding, school meals, water points, latrines, school health services	Develop school meal programs and preschool and school health services
		Reduce the disparities between boys and girls, and maintain girls and children from underprivileged groups in the system	Reduction in the disparities between boys and girls, and maintenance of girls and children from underprivileged groups in the system	Strive to keep girls in the system through positive discrimination
		Intensify HIV/AIDS control and prevention in the school setting	Intensification of HIV/AIDS control and prevention in the school setting	Develop actions in support of vulnerable children Implement the action plan to promote school enrollment for girls
		Upgrade institutional and human capacities	Upgrading of institutional and human capacities	Implement the statutes pertaining to a free education Carry out actions to inform and raise the awareness of teachers, students, staff, and education partners Include lessons on HIV/AIDS in the curricula
		Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of technical and vocational education		Rehabilitate, build, and equip infrastructure that is refocused on the needs of the sector Improve the living and working conditions of teachers and enhance the status of teachers
				Recruit teaching, administrative, and technical staff Train and retrain teaching, administrative, and technical staff
		Develop trade apprenticeship-based	Development of trade	Create specific schools and training institutions for learning

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
Literacy education		training	apprenticeship-based training	the trades: education, training, and apprenticeship centers, vocational high schools and technical institutes, and trade schools
		Develop new training programs in line with real needs	Development of new training programs with a skills-based approach and development of related teaching materials	Create specific mechanisms for training young people outside the school system and idle youth Set in place the vocational training and apprenticeship development fund Conduct a market analysis to identify courses of study important to national development, while focusing the terms of research and development on the country's real needs Implement a skills-based teaching approach Institute an alternating work-study system, a capitalizable units evaluation mechanism, and a process of certification to more closely involve businesses in trainee evaluations Issue vocational training certificates and diplomas such as the CAP, the <i>bac pro</i> , and the BTS
		Develop the partnership between training institutions and government agencies, semi-public institutions, and user enterprises, as well as foreign institutions	Development of the partnership between training institutions and government agencies, semi-public institutions, and user enterprises, as well as foreign institutions	Create mechanisms for consultation and promote partnership agreements Adapt the curricula and make training available to skilled workers
		Develop and implement a national literacy education policy	Development of a national literacy education policy	Train extension workers in andragogy Organize literacy education campaigns Rehabilitate/build and equip literacy education and return-to-school centers Evaluate and expand literacy education programs
Civic and moral education	Promote civic and moral education	Develop and implement a policy on civic and moral education in the school system	Development and implementation of a policy on civic and moral education in the school system	Develop a national policy on civic and moral education Train outreach workers, trainers, and extension workers and incorporate new civic and moral education programs in the training curricula of the school system Organize information, awareness-raising, and communication campaigns in neighborhoods and villages
Higher education	Transmit advanced scientific and technological knowledge	Deconcentrate higher education	Deconcentration of higher education	Conduct studies of local opportunities in order to identify courses of study conducive to endogenous development Gradually set up institutions of higher education nationwide in line with the National Physical Planning Scheme (SNAT)
		Upgrade institutional and human capacities	Upgrading of institutional, material, and human capacities and social infrastructure	Develop and implement a new university map for Congo Gradually rehabilitate, build, and equip institutions of higher education for the five poles and their outreach activities already identified Equip university facilities (classrooms, university housing and cafeterias, multimedia centers, etc.)

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
Scientific research and technological innovation		Implement degree programs consistent with international standards, including the BMD (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate) system	Implementation of degree programs consistent with international standards, including the BMD (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate) system	Recruit professors and non-teaching staff Train and retrain teachers and non-teaching staff Develop the partnership between national training institutions in professional sectors and foreign institutions Create reorientation classes to help regulate the flow of learners between technical and vocational education and higher education Undertake regulation of the private exercise of higher education, by developing and harmonizing specific regulations and by establishing a geographically referenced database of private institutions of learning Award more scholarships and social assistance to girls and facilitate their access to university housing Systematically award scholarships to master's degree candidates
		Reduce the disparities between women and men at university	Reduction of the disparities between women and men at university	Encourage women and girls, both students and teachers, to pursue scientific courses of study, take on strategic decision-making responsibilities at the university, and conduct research
		Implement the policy on scientific research and technological innovation	Implementation of the policy on scientific research and technological innovation	Update Law No. 15-95 of September 7, 1995 establishing the general focus for programming the development of science and technology, which, accompanied by implementing statutes, will permit effective implementation of the new science policy in Congo Finalize and implement the strategic framework for the national innovation policy
		Upgrade institutional, material, and human capacities	Upgrading of institutional, material, and human capacities	Promote and highlight research results Recruit and train researchers Enhance the researcher's position by attaching a more attractive status to the position and by setting up mechanisms to help researchers advance professionally Rehabilitate, build, and equip research institutes to participate in the quest for progress
Culture and the arts	Produce useful and important scientific and technical knowledge	Develop partnerships with foreign research institutes and local businesses and industries	Development of partnerships with foreign research institutes and local businesses and industries	Strengthen the exchanges between researchers of the subregion and those of the Northern countries through partnership agreements centering on priority research programs Formulate interdisciplinary and intersectoral research programs
		Improve the institutional framework in the area of culture and the arts	Improvement of the institutional framework in the area of culture and the arts	Promote the policy of innovation and technology transfer between research and the economic sector Develop and implement a policy on culture and the arts Ratify international agreements and international regulations in these areas
		Promote culture and the arts as a link in sustainable development		

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
Sports		Promote culture and protect the cultural heritage	Promotion of culture and protection of the cultural heritage	Develop, support, and protect community-based expression: our history, our languages, our traditions, our arts, our knowledge
				Train officials to protect the cultural heritage and conduct cultural outreach
				Build and equip community arts centers and promote cultural industries
		Promote local arts	Promotion of local arts	Facilitate craftsmen's access to credit in order to acquire modern means of production and increase their productivity
				Train and retrain people working in local arts
	Promote elite and popular sports	Develop a national policy on sports	Development of a national policy on sports	Periodically organize expositions of works of art to encourage local consumption of handicraft products
				Develop and implement a policy on sports
				Develop sporting competitions at the intra- and inter-departmental levels, at the school and university levels, as well as in businesses and neighborhoods and for elite athletes
		Upgrade the sports infrastructure and human capacities in the area of sports management	Upgrading of the capacities of administrative and technical entities	Organize team management in terms of training, competitions, and team development beyond sports
				Rehabilitate, build, and equip sports infrastructure at schools, at university, and in neighborhoods
			Provide training in sector changes to officials	
Health				
Health	Improve the health status of the population, especially women and children	Improve the operational, leadership, and management capacities of a decentralized health system	Improvement of the operational, leadership, and management capacities of a decentralized health system	Improve the leadership and management capacities at all levels of the system
				Upgrade the fiduciary system
				Upgrade the monitoring and evaluation system (health information system, epidemiological surveillance, operational research, health system watchdog agency)
		Implement an effective human resources management system for health	Implementation of an effective human resources management system for health	Develop and implement a human resources policy
				Establish a human resources directorate
		Rehabilitate, construct, and equip health facilities	Rehabilitation, construction, and outfitting of health facilities	Upgrade the capacities of entities in charge of human resources management at the central and decentralized levels
				Rehabilitate, build, and ensure maintenance of health infrastructure
				Equip health facilities and ensure equipment standardization and maintenance
		Improve access to the basic package of essential health services (PESS)	Improvement of access to the basic package of essential health services (PESS)	Define basic packages of essential health services (PESS) at all levels of the health system and ensure service delivery
				Upgrade the supply system and the system for reliable and sustainable management of drugs, materials, and medical consumables
			Promote community commitment and involvement	

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
Food and nutritional security	Satisfy the needs of the population for quality food	Develop mother and child health	Development of mother and child health	Promote equitable access to health services
				Rehabilitate selected health infrastructure
				Provide medical-technical equipment to selected CSIs/family planning clinics and equip the childbirth and operating rooms of referral facilities
				Train staff of referral hospitals/family planning clinics in complete emergency obstetrical care (SOUC) and basic emergency obstetrical care (SOUB)
				Retrain staff of CSIs/family planning clinics in the intake and treatment of STIs/HIV/AIDS based on the syndrome approach, target adolescents
				Conduct local campaigns to raise the awareness of adolescents and youth regarding the availability of reproductive health services
				Train community intermediaries to deliver community-based services (SBC)
Water and sanitation	Improve access to drinking water	Improve food access and quality	Improvement of food access and quality	Ensure the availability of foodstuffs in cities and the countryside
				Facilitate household access to food
				Ensure quality controls
				Promote exclusive breast-feeding of infants for six months
Water and sanitation	Improve access to drinking water	Improve parent knowledge and practices in regard to nutrition	Improvement of parent knowledge and practices in regard to nutrition	Organize campaigns aimed at parents to provide effective nutritional and health education
				Develop the water sector master plan and approve and implement water subsector strategies and related action plans
				Implement institutional and legal reforms
				Develop and launch a fresh water education program
				Implement a national partnership in regard to water and promote integrated water resources management (GIRE)
				Train sector actors at all levels to ensure attention to GIRE and gender concerns
				Train sector actors at all levels to ensure attention to GIRE and gender concerns
				Build food science laboratories for water and food quality control
				Rehabilitate and build gauging stations
				Rehabilitate existing facilities and develop appropriate technologies (drilled wells, equipped wells, ferro-cement

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
		access to drinking water in rural areas		tanks, catchment areas, and development of springs) for village water supply Adopt procedures for participation and train village leaders in community management with greater integration of women Rehabilitate and build new drinking water supply systems in urban centers Build drinking water supply systems for all district seats
Sanitation	Help improve the living environment	Disseminate appropriate low-cost waste management techniques	Dissemination of appropriate low-cost waste management techniques	Disseminate appropriate technologies by building small-scale urban and rural facilities (flush toilets, improved ventilated latrines, and eco-latrines) in schools, health centers, households, and other public places
		Develop collective urban systems to remove wastewater and rainwater	Development of collective urban systems to remove wastewater and rainwater	Eliminate solid waste at supervised dumps or recycle same Rehabilitate existing facilities and build new rainwater sewers
		Upgrade the operational capacities of public health facilities and local communities in regard to the management of solid waste, wastewater, and rainwater	Upgrading of the operational capacities of public health facilities and local communities in regard to the management of solid waste, wastewater, and rainwater	Build sewerage systems and treatment stations at human institutions (hospitals and hotels) and industrial plants Train staff and provide the facilities with appropriate equipment
Housing				
Housing	Ensure a suitable living environment and suitable housing for as many people as possible	Improve the institutional and legal framework	Improvement of the institutional and legal framework	Involve the private sector in carrying out real estate programs to reduce the shortage of decent housing Update the feasibility studies of the urban property development entity Also ensure strict implementation of town planning instruments
		Implement housing finance mechanisms	Implementation of housing finance mechanisms	Carry out real estate programs and promote private sector involvement Conduct studies on creation of the national housing fund and the national housing strategy Conduct studies on procedures and channels of assistance for developers of public housing and buyers
		Develop production units and promote the use of local building materials	Development of production units and promotion of the use of local building materials	Support local building materials self-production initiatives and both urban and rural real estate development programs Promote an increase in the national capacity to produce local building materials (bricks made of clay, straw, etc.) at affordable prices
		Upgrade the capacities of government agencies and local communities	Upgrading of the capacities of government agencies and local communities	Identify and plan training actions and reorganize agencies
		Enforce construction standards for	Enforcement of construction	Assist BEBATP, DGDUHA, and DGC in monitoring the

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
Goal 4: Improve the social environment and integrate vulnerable groups Social welfare	Expand social welfare to the entire population	housing	standards for housing	enforcement of construction standards for housing
		Develop and implement a new social security policy	Development and implementation of a new social security policy	Implement a genuine, consistent social security system that offers the possibility of creating a number of different schemes (obligatory versus non-obligatory, public law versus private law) with a view to covering all social risks
		Create social security schemes or categories covering most if not all the population	Creation of social security schemes or categories covering most if not all the population	Finalize and implement the national social development plan
		Promote good governance of social welfare agencies	Promotion of good governance of social welfare agencies	Implement the health coverage scheme, the family-and-child-in-difficulty scheme, the disabled persons category, the elderly persons category, and the students category
		Upgrade the institutional capacities of governmental and non-governmental agencies	Upgrading of the institutional capacities of governmental and non-governmental agencies	Upgrade the capacities of the two social security funds (National Social Security Fund and Civil Servant Retirement Fund)
		Promote non-governmental agencies	Promotion of non-governmental agencies	Promote private social welfare agencies
		Develop and implement a national employment policy	Development and implementation of a national employment policy	Upgrade the institutional, legal, human, and technological capacities of central, decentralized, and decentralized agencies of the social action sector, as well as social welfare agencies
		Support job creation in the private sector	Support for job creation in the private sector	Upgrade institutional, legal, human, and technical capacities
		Promote labor-intensive activities	Promotion of labor-intensive activities	Develop and implement a national employment policy (this policy will focus on streamlining recruitment in government agencies, among other matters)
		Improve the legislative and legal framework	Improvement of the legislative and legal framework	Promote entrepreneurship
		Organize the institutional framework for employer/employee relations	Organization of the institutional framework for employer/employee relations	Support private initiative in the area of job creation
		Improve the level of attention to health concerns and job risks of workers in the public and private sectors	Improvement of the level of attention to health concerns and job risks of workers in the public and private sectors	Adopt incentive measures in relevant sectors (construction and public works, agriculture, trade, urban sanitation, etc.)
		Improve purchasing power	Improvement of purchasing power	Update the labor code
				Adopt implementing decrees
Employment and working conditions	Develop employment and improve working conditions			See to rigorous enforcement of the labor code
				Set up a National Committee for Social Dialogue to take charge of negotiations leading to binding agreements, as well as consultations culminating in recommendations
				Strengthen the representation of employer organizations on the National Committee for Social Dialogue
				Institute and implement occupational medicine
				Identify job risks
				Set in place adequate preventive and protective mechanisms and procedures
				Energize the Administrative Reform Commission that handles job accidents and occupational hazards of government employees
				Control the rate of inflation, update collective agreements

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
Childhood	Create a protective environment capable of guaranteeing the survival, development, and welfare of children	Promote and implement agreements, charters, and laws on child protection	Promotion and implementation of agreements, charters, and laws on child protection	and see to their implementation, index wages to the rate of inflation, maintain a sufficient growth rate Promote implementation of agreements, charters, and regulations (Convention on the Rights of the Child, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) Support family, school, and socio-professional integration, rehabilitation, and reintegration of underprivileged groups Create a childhood watchdog agency Adopt and implement new measures for promoting and protecting the rights of the child, with particular attention to children from minority groups
		Simplify the administrative process for recording births and make sure that no fees are charged	Simplification of the administrative process for recording births	Simplify the administrative process for recording births and make sure that no fees are charged at the public records office
		Promote and provide incentives for improvement of basic social services for children	Promotion and provision of incentives for improvement of basic social services for children	Ensure good nutritional quality for children Prevent and treat infectious and parasitic diseases Promote sexual information and education mechanisms aimed at adolescents Promote the conditions necessary for high-quality basic education
		Improve assistance to children in difficulty	Improvement of assistance to children in difficulty	Create and/or support public entities and encourage the creation of private entities to provide assistance to children in difficulty
		Reduce children's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, prevent infection of children, and promote the right to assistance for sick, affected, or infected children	Reduction of children's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, prevention of infection of children, and promotion of the right to assistance for sick, affected, or infected children	Ensure the availability and free distribution of pediatric antiretroviral drugs and essential generic drugs in health facilities and provide free and confidential testing and counseling Implement the national strategy for reducing the vulnerability of children and youth to HIV/AIDS
Special education	Improve access to school enrollment for children with disabilities	Upgrade institutional and human capacities in the area of special education	Upgrading of institutional and human capacities	Adjust the legal framework by finalizing and implementing the strategic framework for school enrollment of children with disabilities Recruit qualified staff and retrain other staff Develop and rehabilitate infrastructure and acquire appropriate equipment Develop specific teaching tools for functional literacy
Youth	Reduce the vulnerability of youth and promote their social and economic integration	Develop and implement a youth policy	Development and implementation of a youth policy	Organize a national dialogue with the participation of young people for the purpose of formulating a youth policy, adopting a national plan for the advancement of youth, and developing implementing decrees for Law No. 9-2000 of July 31, 2000 on youth guidance
		Revitalize the youth employment	Revitalization of the youth	Revitalize existing youth employment programs (PED,

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
Indigenous groups and other minorities	Ensure promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous groups and other minorities	policy	employment policy	PER, THIMO, etc.)
		Promote efforts to prevent deviant behavior on the part of young people	Promotion of efforts to prevent deviant behavior	Promote actions in support of the informal sector and micro-credit access mechanisms
		Develop youth information, education, and communication mechanisms supporting responsible sexuality	Development of youth information, education, and communication mechanisms supporting responsible sexuality	Promote universal civic and moral education
		Improve assistance to young mothers and abandoned children	Improvement of assistance to young mothers and abandoned children	Rehabilitate behavioral discipline in schools, at workplaces, and within communities
		Strengthen HIV/AIDS prevention among youth	Strengthening of HIV/AIDS prevention among youth	Promote the availability of healthy recreational facilities and cultural and sporting activities
		Promote the African Youth Charter	Promotion of the African Youth Charter	Design a training module on sex education in schools
		Develop and implement the policy of social protection of minority groups	Development and implementation of the policy of social protection of minority groups	Create and/or support public entities and encourage the creation of private entities to provide assistance to young mothers and abandoned children
		Implement special rights and promote additional measures to protect minorities	Implementation of special rights and promotion of additional measures to protect minorities	Intensify information, education, and communication activities and communication programs for behavior change
		Improve indigenous groups' access to basic social services	Improvement of indigenous groups' access to basic social services	Encourage voluntary testing and condom use
		Highlight the environmental protection knowledge and know-how of indigenous groups	Highlighting of the environmental protection knowledge and know-how of indigenous groups	Undertake actions to disseminate the Charter in order to speed up the ratification process
Indigenous groups and other minorities	Ensure promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous groups and other minorities	Develop and implement the policy of social protection of minority groups	Adopt new laws aimed at promoting and protecting the rights of persons who belong to a minority	Create an entity to protect minorities and fight discrimination against them
		Implement special rights and promote additional measures to protect minorities	Implementation of special rights and promotion of additional measures to protect minorities	Organize campaigns to record births at the public records office
		Improve indigenous groups' access to basic social services	Improvement of indigenous groups' access to basic social services	Create committees to monitor the progress made in protecting minorities
		Highlight the environmental protection knowledge and know-how of indigenous groups	Highlighting of the environmental protection knowledge and know-how of indigenous groups	Facilitate access for melanin-deficient individuals to medical coverage for problems related to fragile skin and vision
Goal 5: HIV/AIDS prevention and control	Reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the population	Improve indigenous groups' access to basic social services	Develop health and education services in order to reach indigenous groups	Develop health and education services in order to reach indigenous groups
		Highlight the environmental protection knowledge and know-how of indigenous groups	Highlighting of the environmental protection knowledge and know-how of indigenous groups	Develop the wells needed for their water supply
		Improve indigenous groups' access to basic social services	Improvement of indigenous groups' access to basic social services	Involve indigenous groups in the development and implementation of environmental policies
HIV/AIDS	Reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the population	Intensify prevention activities at the community level, in workplaces, and in health care facilities	Intensification of prevention activities at the community level, in workplaces, and in health care facilities	Develop the national communication strategy with special attention to gender and the cultural dimensions of prevention
		Intensify prevention activities at the community level, in workplaces, and in health care facilities	Intensification of prevention activities at the community level, in workplaces, and in health care facilities	Organize awareness-raising campaigns (IEC/CCC) and encourage testing of individuals
		Intensify prevention activities at the community level, in workplaces, and in health care facilities	Intensification of prevention activities at the community level, in workplaces, and in health care facilities	Increase the number of centers that offer HIV counseling

Area	General Objective	Specific Objectives	Strategies	Priority Actions
				and testing
				Ensure the availability and promotion of male and female condoms at an affordable price
				Train actors in civil society, the private sector, and the ministries
				Control sexually transmitted infections by improving coverage of same
				Develop communication to reduce the vulnerability of adolescents and youth to HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections, and early pregnancy
				Improve the safety of blood transfusions
				Train staff to provide medical, nutritional, and psychological coverage
				Integrate HIV/AIDS coverage in referral hospitals and approved religious and private health facilities
				Provide coverage of OEVs and develop partnerships for other forms of coverage
				Make every effort to reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV
				Guarantee the permanent availability of drugs, reagents, and consumables in all departments
				Consolidate the research and studies program, upgrade the capacities of actors, and improve the data collection, processing, analysis, and dissemination system
				Establish a platform of consultation and information exchange to optimize results
				Refer to the relevant areas