



## What does international cooperation in favour of human development mean in practice?

Taking human development as a reference involves reorienting both national political measures and international exchanges, including cooperation action. What makes the human development approach different from policies focused mainly on economic growth is the subordination of public and private initiatives to the personal development of individuals and the constant effort to extend the choices open to each person. This attempt to enable individuals to achieve an increasing degree of control over the processes that shape their lives is accompanied by attention paid to the most disadvantaged groups of the population. There can be no human development without extending life expectancy, without improving health, without ensuring access to education from the primary up to the most advanced level, without reducing gender disparities, without improving the quality of the environment, or without making it possible for each person to have a decent income.

The global human development reports for the years 1993 and 2002 showed that political participation, far from being a luxury for poor countries, is an imperative for human development, and therefore a priority without which **governance** cannot meet everyone's expectations. International cooperation must address this need to deepen democracy and strengthen its roots. Hence the importance France and UNDP attach to reinforcing the legally constituted state and to transparency and the efficient functioning of institutions.

- Following the military coup on 15 March 2003, the **Central African Republic**, where the democratisation process had been interrupted, sought outside support to make a return in the direction of democratic institutions possible. The provisional government asked the United Nations to help it address the obstacles of an organisational, technical and financial nature preventing the holding of a referendum (November 2004) and presidential and parliamentary elections (January and February 2005). A project in support of the elections was set up, featuring the coordination of international aid in the election process and technical assistance in organising the elections – awareness raising, taking a census and drawing up electoral rolls, training election officers, logistics support, etc.
- UNDP implemented a similar project with France's support in the **Comoros**, where joint efforts were made in support of parliamentary elections and in providing assistance in setting up and running various institutions. The joint action was concentrated on reinforcing the capacity of the structures and administrations involved in the elections, management of the funds mobilised to support the election process and making people aware of the importance of the elections. Joint action also assisted in preparing and implementing the 2004 budget, and helped finalise the drafting of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.
- In **Burundi**, cooperation involves three areas of intervention – reinforcing the legislative and supervisory capacities of the National Assembly and the Senate, support for civil society organisations, and assistance in promoting and protecting human rights.

Because it is decimating entire populations and has devastating economic and social effects that accentuate the poverty trap, **the HIV/AIDS epidemic** constitutes another area for priority action for human development. International cooperation has made it possible to set up a Global Fund to Fight AIDS. It is in those countries hardest hit by the epidemic that governments and international organisations are working together.

- In **Burkina Faso**, for example, the joint activities of France and UNDP form part of the National Programme to Combat HIV/AIDS, particularly by encouraging the NGOs and associations working in the country to become more professional. The activities have included educational support for 3500 children from 17 provinces orphaned by AIDS, the promotion of anonymous, voluntary screening within communities, help with computerising associations and training managers active in the association environment.

The **economic and social spheres** that affect people's everyday lives, including employment, basic social services, and more opportunities for all, occupy a central role in combating poverty. In many cases, this dimension of human development concerns cooperation in development.

- Thus France, among other European countries, has made a financial contribution to the Emergency Economic Management Fund set up by UNDP in **Guinea Bissau** to coordinate the international support the country was receiving. The purpose of this Fund is to satisfy the population's most pressing needs and ensure the functioning of the State, particularly as regards priority social sectors. It also acts as a mechanism for receiving and paying out contributions from financial backers within the country. Its main function is to ensure the payment of salary arrears and the functioning of ordinary social services.

The **management of post-conflict situations** is essential for the living conditions of individuals and populations. Apart from the national and local processes of reconciliation and the pacification of countries by a return to respect for democratic legality, human development also includes such activities as disarmament, the economic reintegration of former fighters, and landmine clearance.

- France has combined forces with UNDP for "humanitarian landmine clearance" projects, including in **Cambodia**, where the density of landmines and other explosive devices that have not been defused is among the highest anywhere in the world and a schedule to eliminate landmines by 2015 has been adopted. The French State's contribution of human and financial resources was added to a UNDP programme of activities for clearing landmines from historic and archaeological sites and training local clearance experts.
- Similarly, in **Mozambique**, France contributed 1 170 000 euros to speeding up the clearance of landmines being carried out by UNDP in the area around Inhambane, in collaboration with the *Institut National du Déminage* (national institute for landmine clearance).

International cooperation in favour of human development takes many forms, depending on the financial procedures adopted and the way in which the efforts are structured within a given programme, as a bi- or multi-lateral partnership.