



**Interoffice Memorandum**

To: Ms. Maria Do Valle Ribeiro  
UN Resident Coordinator  
Mauritania

Date: 16 June 2009

From:   
UNDP- New York

Extension: 6005

Subject: "Scaling up the fight against child hunger and malnutrition in south-east Mauritania"

File: MDGF-2019

**I. Approval Status**

On behalf of the MDG-F Steering Committee I am pleased to inform you that your Joint Programme "Scaling up the fight against child hunger and malnutrition in south-easter regions of Mauritania" is hereby approved with an allocation of USD\$7,500,000 million for three years. This figure includes 7% for indirect costs incurred by UN Participating Organizations. Please note the 1% AA fee will be reimbursed directly to the MDTF Office and need not be included in your allocation.

**II. JP design comments**

We have identified in section III below, **those actions that need to be taken and guidance on the necessary changes we require to the design of your Joint Programme** prior to its signature. Once these adjustments have been reflected in the document, you may proceed with signature of the Joint Programme document. In addition to the Government, the UN Resident Coordinator and Participating UN Organizations should each sign the Joint Programme document. We would encourage you to ensure some visibility for this event and for the launch of implementation.

We appreciate that the Joint Programme intends to reverse the current worsening in underweight prevalence in children under five in two South-eastern regions of Mauritania, where malnutrition and food insecurity levels are highest and living conditions are in fastest decline. The programme will provide an integrated package of interventions for prevention and treatment of malnutrition. The main areas of intervention include improving food security, improving maternal and young children nutritional status, and strengthening the capacity of national partners and communities capacities. The programme targets 107,000 children under the age of 5 and 316,000 women between 15 and 49 years in the regions of Hod El Gharbi and Hod El Echargui.

The draft Joint Programme is a faithful extension of the approved Concept Note. An acceptable effort has been made to address the recommendations of the technical Sub-Committee and the Steering Committee.

The comments of our technical reviewer on the Joint programme document are attached for reference. The review is very positive and includes some useful recommendations you may wish to consider in the finalization of the document or during the course of the programme's implementation. Please note that the changes recommended by the reviewer are not required by the Fund, unless specified under section III below. The Secretariat supports this assessment.



### **Relevance and external coherence**

We are pleased to see that the Joint Programme meets a number of the Fund's strategic goals and is aligned with Mauritania's National Strategy against Poverty 2006-2010 and UNDAF. The programme is expected to further and implement existing national sectoral plans and strategies in collaboration with ongoing interventions supported by the national government and other development partners. It is expected to contribute to the attainment of MDG 1, with a clear reduction of the malnourished children under the age of 5 by 22,000 and the number of food insecure households by 10, 000.

There is a clear value added in the UN Participating Agencies (UNICEF, WFP, FAO and WHO) and a good division of labor between the agencies. The programme builds on existing successful initiatives such as REACH and incorporates valuable lessons learnt in the design of the joint programme in particular when it comes to targeting beneficiaries, conducting the situation analysis and establishing the baselines as well as determining the M&E plan and institutional framework for the implementation of the programme.

We appreciate that the National Steering Committee, including Government and Spanish representation, has discussed the proposal in depth and endorses the programme design.

### **Internal Coherence**

The programme has an excellent problem analysis with evidence based information confirming causes and trends. The strategies identified are sound and coherent. The Programme is focused and strategic. The logic between outcomes, outputs and activities is well defined and justified. The synergies established with UN initiatives funded by other partners to supplement diets with micro-nutrients and fortified foods are appreciated.

We are of the view that the joint programme document submitted by the UNCT in Mauritania reflects the outcome and spirit of an inclusive and participatory process with all relevant stakeholders at the national and regional levels. The programme will be implemented simultaneously in the two regions and in distinct phases to take account of broad participatory planning processes and the effect of the seasons and nomadic tradition. The roles and responsibilities of national partners at the different levels are clearly defined. The results framework is coherent and very comprehensive, nonetheless, the indicative activities need to be further developed with greater detail. In particular, those activities that relate to the Village and Food Security Stocks, the micro-credits and the revolving fund.

In terms of the programme management, we feel that the proposed arrangements for coordination and management are sound and seek synergies, and maximize coordination and logistics with other joint programmes funded by the MDG Achievement Fund. They ensure the participation and ownership of all relevant stakeholders at the national and local levels.

### **Sustainability**

The programme clearly supports the efforts of the government in improving delivery of basic health and nutrition public services, in bettering regional government coordinating structures and using a single strategy for targeting beneficiaries based on existing data on acute malnutrition.

The programme has an underlying capacity building strategy at all levels of government including targeted communities. An additional effort has been made to how the different structures and institutions will be involved in the coordination and management of the joint programme.



The risks of the programme have been identified and their corresponding risk mitigation strategies.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

The monitoring and evaluation framework is sound and includes the majority of the baseline information and relevant indicators. It also contains specific information on the frequency and how the data will be collected. The annual targets are well articulated and precise.

The Secretariat plans to work with all approved programmes during 2009 to address their M&E frameworks and to develop a small number of common indicators relating to the MDGs, thematic windows, UN reform and the Paris Declaration.

### **III. JP re-design requirements**

Nonetheless, the Secretariat has carefully assessed the revised draft Joint Program, and recommends it for approval with some reservations that will warrant a close monitoring during the implementation phase of the joint programme to ensure the expected impact of the Joint Programme. When transmitting the signed joint programme, please indicate in the cover letter how the following MDG-F Secretariat's recommendations have been taken into account in the signed programme document:

1. To **re-work the Results Framework** in order to provide additional details in some of the activities and to justify the allocated amount to each of the proposed activities. More specifically, the disaggregated budget needs to be provided for the activities under smart output 1.1 with an allocated amount of \$1,270,698; smart output 1.2 with \$887,000; smart output 1.3 with \$428,000; smart output 1.5 with \$749,321; smart output 2.2 with \$322,020, technical assistance under smart output 2.6 with \$327,120, smart output 2.7 with \$346,998
2. To be **more specific in the proposed activities** which are worded fairly vague, for example: '*Mise en place et renforcement des Stocks Alimentaire Villageois de Sécurité*' how many? how this will work and maintained after the programme finishes?; '*Mise en œuvre des activités de vivre contre travail par la création ou réhabilitation des ouvrages a la production agricole et d'élevage*' this is not an activity but an enunciation that more activities will take place but they are not defined; '*Mise en place de stratégies avancés et de proximité :unités mobiles, visites réguliers*', etc..
3. To ensure that the **proposed activities will lead to the desired output**, for example smart output 2.5 is about increasing access to quality water, but the proposed activity does not address the issue of access but quality control of the water.
4. To **consider metrics of wasting and stunting, as well as, diet diversity and household access to food** to measure progress towards decreasing underweight prevalence in children under five in two south-eastern regions of Mauritania.
5. To ensure that the **M&E system in place is participatory** and includes **indicators to capture progress at the MDG levels and gender**.



#### **IV. Management arrangements and delegation of authority**

On receipt of a copy of the signed document, the Fund Secretariat will transfer the full three-year allocation to the custody of the Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) Office pending further instructions from you.

Please note the MDTF Office will pass-through funds to Participating Organizations on instruction from you as Resident Coordinator and Co-Chair of the National MDG-F Steering Committee.

As reflected in the Fund's Framework Document (Section 9 'Formulation Process & Release of Funds) and the global MoU with Participating Organizations (Article I, 2-c) the MDTF Office will release resources on an annual, advance basis. For the first advance, these funds will be transferred on the basis of receipt of the first year Annual Workplan and the signed Joint Programme document. Subsequent annual advances will be released on instructions from you and on the basis of a) receipt of the next annual work-plan approved by the National Steering Committee; b) evidence that a formal review of the programme's progress has been undertaken not more than three months earlier, either in the form of an annual progress report (if the timing coincides) or through the minutes of a National Steering Committee where this has been discussed; and c) only when combined commitments against the existing advance have exceeded 70%. Please review the initial year budget requests carefully with participating organizations in order to ensure realistic delivery targets in this regard. The annual agency apportionment projected in the final budget attached to the signed Joint Programme document should also be reviewed and can be revised up to the time of your first funds-advance request. This is important for the reasons outlined below.

In order to allow the implementation team some flexibility to adapt the strategy to unexpected challenges and opportunities (most particularly delivery issues), and to empower Resident Coordinators in their oversight responsibilities, this memorandum also provides you with the authority over the three year duration of the programme in consultation with Participating Organizations and with the agreement of your National Steering Committee to (a) transfer up to \$1,000,000 or 20% of the total value of the project budget – whichever is lowest – *between Participating Organizations* identified in the original Joint Programme budget and (b) re-phase up to \$1,000,000 or 20% of the total value of the project budget – whichever is lowest - *between years*. The base-line against which these ceilings will be measured is the annual budget projection (by year and by participating organization) confirmed at the time of your first funds-advance request. The MDTF Office must be informed of any revisions of this kind, decided locally and is responsible for tracking these delegation ceilings for each programme. Any changes that fall outside these parameters will have to be referred back to the (Global) MDG-F Steering Committee for approval.

As you will appreciate, one of the MDG-F's express goals is to strengthen the role of Resident Coordinators as leaders of Country Teams. The success of the MDG-F activities will depend on your ongoing leadership and engagement. We count on you to exercise this leadership and to ensure this Joint Programme remains an ongoing, integrated effort by the UN system in support of national priorities. Please also use the National Steering Committee mechanism to help ensure national ownership by the Government in particular and involve it in important financial and programmatic oversight decisions.



The signed Joint Programme document and the completed Fund Release Form should be sent to the MDG-F Secretariat and MDTF Office within 30 days of the receipt of this memorandum. If this deadline is not possible, please inform the secretariat accordingly.

The Executive Coordinator of the MDTF Office, Bisrat Aklilu, will be in contact with any specific documentation requirements to ensure the programme meets compliance requirements for the Fund's pass-through arrangements.

With best wishes.

- cc. Mr. Bisrat Aklilu, Executive Coordinator, Multi-Donor Trust Fund Office  
Mr. Tegegnetwork Gettu, Assistant Administrator and Regional Director, Bureau for Africa, UNDP, New York  
H.E. Mr. D. Juan Antonio Yáñez-Barnuevo, Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations  
H.E. Mr. Mohamed Ould Tolba, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to the United Nations  
Mr. Juan López-Doriga, Director-General of Development Planning & Evaluation, MFAC Madrid  
Ms. Debbie Landey, Director, United Nations Development Operations Coordinator Office (DOCO) MDG-F Secretariat