

# Summary of Mauretania National Report

## Climate Change and CDM Activities

After the preparation of Mauritania's Initial National Communication the needs of the country were evaluated in four sectors: industry, agriculture, domestic energy and transport. These in turn were assessed under four headings: the current situation as regards GHG emissions; identifying ways of reducing them; identifying technological options and proposals for action; and compiling a portfolio of projects to this end.

Other activities have been undertaken to strengthen capacities under the auspices of the CDM. Mauritanian experts participated in a total of eight workshops on CDM formation. Another five regional ones were attended in Montreal, Ouagadougou, Bamako, Madrid and Vienna. A national workshop at Nouakchott on financing CDM Phase II was attended by more than 30 experts. A further 12 local workshops on financing were held in the district capitals.

In November 2005 a communication to UNIDO on financing dealt with climate change in the context of Mauritania; the industrial and energy sectors; and the implementation of the two identified CDM projects. This communication was followed by a major campaign to raise awareness of the CDM and increase contacts among industrialists, manufacturing enterprises and other Mauritanian employers.

An order creating the CDM national authority was initiated in October 2005 and circulated for signature.

## Criteria for sustainable development

In putting the concept of Sustainable Human Development in the forefront, and in setting up a watchdog for this purpose and to continue the fight against poverty, Mauritania is resolutely determined to advance the realisation of the United Nations Millennium Goals for Development. Of these goals, two are central to Mauritania's strategy: reduction of extreme poverty and hunger; and ensuring a sustainable environment. These were the motives behind its signature of the New Partnership on African Development (NEPAD).

Mauritania's sustainable development strategy is based on five fundamental principles, including the facilitation of sustainable access to basic services as a means of countering poverty. This access must be sustainable in the sense that it does not lead to increased human pressure on the environment and natural resources, or cause additional depletion of the latter.

The sustainable development strategy and its plan of action are governed by four criteria:

- Integration - augmentation or intervention in areas not otherwise covered;
- Equity – giving more to those who have less, and ensuring a balance between the needs of different generations;
- Globality – poverty is multidimensional, and can affect the entire ecosystem;

Participation – poverty and environmental degradation have a reciprocal relationship, as do poverty reduction and sustainable development. An awareness of this has to permeate the organisation at all levels.

### **Constraints to CDM Adoption**

Mauritania has signed the Kyoto Protocol. Possible barriers to implementation are therefore to be sought on the side of the investors and not the country. And if one particular barrier has to be highlighted, it is lack of information. The will is there among the decision makers, but the private sector is only interested in opportunities that work to its advantage.

The Mauritanian market is liberal, and the investment code encourages initiative. Climatic and geographical conditions are potentially suitable for the development of sequestered carbon reservoirs. However, the technological standard of the country mirrors the extremely low purchasing power of the population; any form of alternative energy is acceptable as a way of providing a minimum of comfort and means of subsistence.

The principal barriers to the achievement of results include: the absence of a national authority; the lack of any large-scale awareness of the CDM; the lack of financiers and persons capable of organising and setting up the mechanism; and the lack of an agreement on enhanced participation by the private sector.

### **National Stakeholders**

To be strictly correct there are no CDM stakeholders as such; there are only a number of structures engaged in generating emissions or sequestering greenhouse gases. The CDM concept is still very little known, and no project is recognised under that title.

At government level the authority responsible for the UNFCCC is the Ministry of the Environment. Its director is the focal point for all conventions on the environment ratified by Mauritania, including the Kyoto Protocol, and represents the government in CDM affairs. Activities relating to climate change are coordinated within this directorate under a coordinator with a small staff. This serves as an embryo national operating authority for the CDM pending an official designation.

ADER, a government agency, is presently the body whose mandate most nearly approaches the requirements of the CDM. Set up in 2000, its function is to coordinate and promote decentralised rural electrification, with an initial target of 3,500 villages all over the country. ADER could act as sub-contractor for CDM activities.

SOMELEC is a state society with private capital. Its function is the distribution of the electricity produced by the Manantali hydro-electric scheme, which generates 800 GWh for distribution to Mauritania, Sénégal and Mali. This institution is transnational and could play an important role in the CDM process.

The private sector is structured and dynamic. The National Confederation of Mauritanian Employers, which encompasses eight professional associations, is organised on federal lines. The private sector plays a conspicuous role alongside the

public one. It is an economic force, and is thereby a major potential partner in CDM activities.

Nouakchott has a university and ten colleges with a corps of professors who are prominent in environmental discussions. They could make a valuable research contribution to the CDM process.

Mauritanian civil society is organised, and recognised by the public authorities. The very dynamic d'ONG group, with 50 members, specialises in environmental questions. It is becoming increasingly prominent at national and regional level, and could be delegated certain functions in respect of the CDM.

The people and communities of Mauritania are the principal beneficiaries of CDM projects. They are generally very aware of the necessity of protecting the environment and conserving natural resources.

### **CDM Potential in the Industrial and Energy Sectors**

The CDM is of considerable importance to Mauritania. Its potential is illustrated by the emergence of several CDM projects for rural electrification and telecommunications using renewable resources.

For example, out of 135,000 hectares of potentially irrigated land area in the valley of the River Sénégal only 20,000 ha have so far been developed. Any initiative in this direction would find conditions suitable for the production of all sorts of biomass, including village and forest woodlands.

Pumped irrigation using thermal energy has benefited from the fact that the power lines from the Manantali hydro-electric plant pass through the valley, and innumerable villages are already receiving the benefits of electricity.

The industrial and energy sectors are therefore in advance, which will be accelerated by the discovery of offshore reserves of oil in Mauritanian waters.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The CDM represents a distinct opportunity for less developed countries, even if the tools necessary for its perception are lacking. To the extent that it becomes an imperative for the protection of the world against the effects of climate change it will be a useful means of facilitating access to the market for carbon credits and reinforcing capacities at all levels. Mauritania has significant potential for the CDM project as well as the legislation necessary for the realisation of sustainable development. It would also be useful to set up a regional system of cooperation between national CDM authorities to facilitate exchanges of information and to reinforce the means of negotiation with other participants. The establishment of national forums of industrialists would help to improve awareness of the issue. National education policies should contain a module on climate change in order to stimulate interest in the use of clean energy.