

Dominican Republic UNDP Country Report. High-Level Meeting – 5 – year Review of Progress made in Addressing Vulnerabilities of SIDS through Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Further Implementation (MSI) of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA).

Support from UNDP to thematic areas identified in the BOPA and MSI are being given as follows:

Climate Change and Sea-level rise

During this last 5 years, support has been given to the production of both the First and Second National Communications to the Climate Change Convention Secretariat. Green House Gases emissions have been estimated for the years 1990, 1994, 1998 and 2000; climatic models have been applied and scenarios projected. Expected projections for main sectors, such as water, forestry, agriculture, health, tourism and biodiversity have been discussed. Other studies have included scientific assessment of meteorological and agricultural drought risk assessment, and the development of a national strategy for climate change and the National Adaptation Program of Action. Through all these activities, emphasis has been given to the strengthening of national capacities from governmental and nongovernmental sectors. Most of this has been financially supported by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF).

Natural and Environmental Disasters

Natural and environmental disaster risk management is essential in countries like the Dominican Republic, situated in the path of tropical storms along the Caribbean chain of islands. UNDP Dominican Republic is supporting the implementation of a disaster prevention and preparedness program in conjunction of main key actor, such as Civil Defense, Red Cross, National Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and Ministry of Public Health. The program is focus at the northeastern part of the country, the most vulnerable to floods and mudslides (lower Yuna watershed). After the pass of Olga and Noel, extreme climatic events at the end of 2007, also started to implement and early recovery program for the two most impacted areas in Duarte and Barahona provinces. It includes grant support to sustainable livelihoods projects implemented by community based organizations (CBOs) and/or local NGOs. Financial support is given by the European Union and other key partners.

Water Resources/wetlands

Hispaniola harbors the biggest lakes of the insular Caribbean, the Enriquillo Lake (250 km²) in the Dominican Republic and Lake Azuei (170 km²) in Haiti. Both lakes are in close proximity to each other within the Dominican -Haitian border region. Since the passage of Noel and Olga, two extreme climatic events by the end of 2007, both lakes started to considerable increase their water volume, expanding to cover lands in use for agricultural and livestock production as well as some relevant local infrastructures (roads, immigration offices at the Haitian-Dominican border). UNDP has contributed in both countries to assess the social impacts of such event, looking forward to recommend actions needed to contribute to mitigate them.

Land Resources

Land degradation has serious impacts on island-states, with limited soil resources. Although the Dominican Republic is struggling to keep and increase vegetation cover and sustainable watershed management, sustainable land management (SLM) has not been broadly achieved. UNDP is implementing a pilot project in the Sabana Yegua upper watershed in support of all major process required to develop and establish mechanisms and livelihoods for sustainable land management. At the same time, has supported the development of Artibonite's binational watershed project

together with both the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Strengthening of national capacities is provided through an enabling project.

Energy Resources

UNDP through the UNDP/GEF Small Grants program has been supporting CBOs and local NGOs in the development of small sustainable energy projects, both photovoltaic and micro hydro ones. More than 70 such projects have been funded, including over ten micro hydros. The experiences reached has allow to expand and scale up the micro hydro construction at poor isolated communities, with no possibility to be cover by the national electric grid in the near and mid term. With financial support from the European Union, the Dominican Government and UNDP these actions are being escalated and a network of mini hydros is to be established among localities through the country. A network of community cooperatives develops to manage the production and use of sustainable community energy is also being supported.

Biodiversity Resources

Hispaniola is one of the islands that most contribute to the singular biodiversity richness of the Caribbean region. The Dominican Republic has established a broad National System of protected Areas (SINAP) to support the conservation of its biodiversity and the ecological processes and services. As in other countries, the system of protected areas needs to be strengthened and mechanism for long term financial sustainability developed and established. UNDP is supporting the development of a GEF financed project to help the Dominican Republic achieve these goals.