



*Embassy of the United States of America
Antananarivo, Madagascar*

November 27, 2007

UNCLASSIFIED

ENDORSEMENT MEMORANDUM

TO: Acting Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance, Henrietta Fore

FROM: Ambassador Niels Marquardt *NM*

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2008 Operational Plan [and Performance Report on Fiscal Year 2007] for the Union of the Comoros

Programmed U.S. foreign assistance to the Union of the Comoros has been modest, just USD 100,000 annually for International Military Education and Training (IMET). However, fall-out Economic Support Funds (ESF) were secured in 2006 and 2007 to conduct an approximately USD 500,000 teacher-training education project and a USD 50,000 governance assessment, and another \$350,000 for a micro-enterprise project is now in the approval process. Finally, we are beefing up our Self-Help and Democracy and Human Rights Programs in the Comoros, with \$20,000 allocated from FY07 funds for six new projects on Moheli and Grande Comore islands.

These programs start to advance our transformational diplomacy goals in the Comoros – a tiny, moderate, democratic, Muslim nation where even small amounts of assistance will go a long way -- but they are not yet either sufficient or sustained. To have a truly transformational impact over time, I continue to believe that more robust and more permanent annual Development Assistance programs must be incorporated into a comprehensive, coherent Operational Plan. As we prepare to expand our State presence in the Comoros, I believe that we will make significant headway in this direction over the coming year.

Peace and Security: The Government of the Union of the Comoros continues to support U.S. counterterrorism objectives, cooperating fully with the Embassy Defense Attaché, CJTF-HOA, and the Regional Security Office. The recent inclusion of the Comoros in the East Africa Counter-Terrorism Initiative reflects both this cooperative attitude and the stakes involved. Union President Ahmed Abdallah Sambi remains steadfastly opposed to extremism and violence; he reiterates this commitment privately and in public. Although relatively few Comorans have sufficient English language skills to participate in military training, there is a small and growing cadre of U.S.-trained officers, and a U.S.-provided language lab in Moroni is intended to help them around this obstacle. This group has become more professional, knowledgeable of their human rights responsibility, and competent in border security. That said, the three-island nation of Comoros remains a potential transit point and recruiting ground for terrorists.

Beyond necessary security assistance, basic economic development is required to create opportunity, stability, and prosperity in the Comoros. If the country moves in that direction, it can become an increasingly responsible neighbor and U.S. partner in the region. If the Comoros fails to make progress, however, it risks reverting to its past history of three decades of instability, coups d'etat, and consequent risks spreading into the Indian Ocean Region.

Governing Justly and Democratically (Good Governance): Although not programmed in our Operational Plan document, unforeseen funds promise to be modestly helpful in establishing a road map for sound federal institutions in the Comoros.

Investing in People (Health, Social, and Economic Services, Education): Union President Sambu's top priority is to invest in his people. The United States, through the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa, has begun to step up with substantial human and financial resources to rehabilitate school buildings. An unexpected, but extremely welcome, ESF project in education will work on distance-training programs for teacher's professional development. The Union government has also requested the re-opening of our Peace Corps there, a request which I support fully and which has already benefited from a full assessment completed in late 2006; Peace Corps has made a tentative commitment for their return early in FY08. That program will focus on education. Additionally, \$350,000 in ESF funds are in the process of being allocated for a micro-enterprise project in the Comoros, in support of President Sambu's growth and poverty reduction goals.

I expect future Operational Plans for the Comoros, and my associated Endorsement Memos, to be more substantive, more detailed, and more demanding. This Embassy, predating my arrival, has long advocated for resources for this fragile, impoverished, pro-American, Muslim democracy. I am pleased to see us now on the doorstep to starting programs that will have a long-term transformational diplomacy impact.

Comoros 2007 Performance Report

Program Area Performance \ 1 Peace & Security \ 1.3 Stabilization Operations and Security Sector Reform

Comoran military continue to lack capacity and professionalism to accomplish their missions. In addition, the Embassy's major challenge in achieving our International Military Education and Training (IMET) goals was lack of English proficiency. In FY 2007, only USD 64,000 of the USD 101,000 programmed was expended because potential students did not meet the English language requirement for participation. One Comoran student met the requirement and completed IMET training in counterterrorism and border security. In addition, Mobile Training Teams (MTTs) conducted counterterrorism and border security courses for 50 Comorans.

Program Element Performance \ 1 Peace & Security \ 1.3 Stabilization Operations and Security Sector Reform \ 1.3.6 Defense, Military, and Border Restructuring, Reform and Operations

Our modest IMET and MTT resources continue to pay dividends in the Comoros for Program 1.3.6 \"Element Defense, Military and Border Restructuring, Reform and Operations\". Despite substantial investment in a language lab, English fluency and proficiency remains a challenge in the Comoros. This Francophone archipelago has very few English speakers and is isolated from Anglophone countries. Senior Comoran civilian and military leaders value the IMET program and wish to see it continued, if not expanded. Over time, we will overcome the challenge of English proficiency so that more Comorans can benefit from this much-needed training.

Element Indicator Narrative \ 1 Peace & Security \ 1.3 Stabilization Operations and Security Sector Reform \ 1.3.6 Defense, Military, and Border Restructuring, Reform and Operations

As reported in the Program Element Narrative, the IMET Program was only able to use two-thirds of its funds for the Comoros in FY 2007. As a result, one Comoran participated in IMET training, although an additional twenty completed the MTT course. That Post under-spent on IMET in the Comoros and did not meet all of our targets does not reflect a lack of political will in the Comoros. Cooperation and interest in IMET is strong among civilian and military leaders. However, English proficiency has proved a significant obstacle in implementing this project. Continued investment in our English language lab will pay dividends with better results versus targets in FY 2008 – all other things being equal.

1 Peace & Security - Comoros

1.3 Stabilization Operations and Security Sector Reform\1.3.6 Defense, Military, and Border Restructuring, Reform and

Number of Border Security officers trained with USG assistance

2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target
60	24	50	24	-

710

1.3.6 Defense, Military, and Border Restructuring, Reform and Operations narrative (no more than 1500 characters)

chars

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