

## Reducing Gender Based Violence

through the joint participation of the Government, Technical and Financial partners and the population

## Stepping up action

to reduce the maternal mortality rate

## Fighting against HIV/AIDS

through preventive and curative methods.

## Progressive appointment of women

to decision-making positions.

## Improve the production of reliable, up-to-date statistical

**data** for analysis and studies on public policy



## Moving closer to the Comoros we want

Implementation of ICPD30 & AADPD+10 : 5 top best practices



## Reducing Gender Based Violence

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### Context

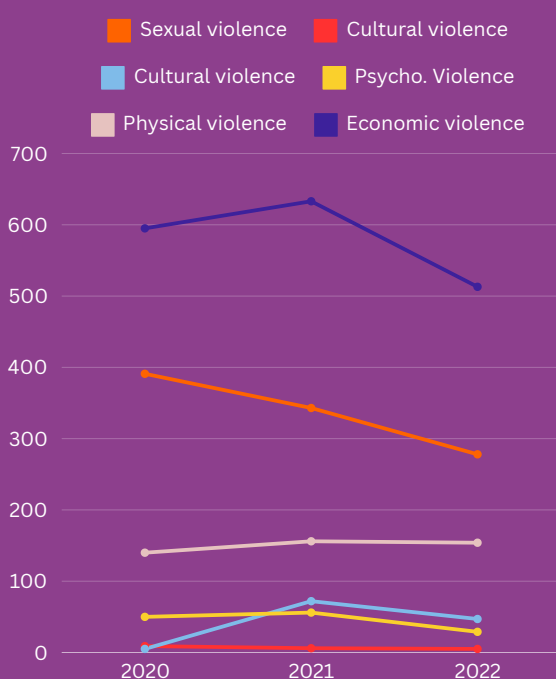
Gender-based violence (GBV) takes many forms, and mainly affects women and children between the ages of 11 and 17. The majority of GBV is sexual in nature. Grande Comores is the island where most GBV are recorded.

The government's ambition is to rapidly reduce the different types of gender-based violence.

### Actions

- 1 Application of traditional mediation and conflict resolution mechanisms.
- 2 Application of laws and legal texts (It is estimated that there are around 500 prisoners for sexual assaults in Comoros prisons).
- 3 Increased number of legal texts to punish the perpetrators of acts of violence, such as:
  - (i) The new penal code, which criminalizes violence against women and children, including rape of one's own wife, consent of an underage girl, child trafficking, etc. Penalties range from 10 years to the death penalty.
  - (ii) Law 014-36/AU of December 22, 2014 on the prevention and repression of violence against women and promulgated by Decree 015-058/PR of May 2, 2015.
  - (iii) the Family Code Act includes provisions allowing women to seek divorce and prohibiting, in Article 14, marriage before the age of 18.
- 4 Warning and monitoring committees to combat gender-based violence have been set up in 16 of the country's 54 communes.
- 5 Capacity-building for magistrates and technical staffs of listening services (psychologists, ...) on gender-based violence.
- 6 Increased awareness campaigns.
- 7 Creation of specialized institutions for the prevention of GBV and the care of victims, such as (i) the Minors' Brigade for the care of minors and women victims of violence, (ii) the setting up of Child Listening and Protection Units and (iii) the creation of the General Delegation for Human Rights, which works to protect the rights of children and women.
- 8 Guidelines for the identification of temporary foster families for child victims of violence whose alleged perpetrators are close relatives (father, stepfather, cousins, uncles, neighbors, etc.)

### The results



The 2022 MICS survey shows that there has been a decline in physical violence against women over the last 10 years, **from 29% in 2012 to 2.3% in 2022.**

Similarly, the situation of known cases of violence in 2022 indicates progress compared to 2020. Indeed, the overall number of cases of violence against women and girls in 2022 has fallen by almost 14% compared with 2020. Cases of sexual violence were down by almost 29%, as were cases of physical violence, which were down by 58%.

### Lessons Learned

To guarantee a significant reduction in GBV, the mobilization of all parties is required: the Government, through the sentencing of perpetrators of acts of violence and the establishment of institutions for the prevention and care of GBV victims; partners, through the funding of projects and programs to support the fight against GBV; and civil society organizations, through awareness-raising campaigns.

Psychological follow-up is an essential part of the package of measures to care for victims.

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## Fighting against HIV/AIDS through preventive and curative methods.

### Context

The concomitance of the AIDS and COVID-19 pandemics with the adverse effects of the Russian-Ukrainian war have increased the threat of HIV-AIDS, even though prevalence is very low: 0.025% according to the 2003 HIV survey and 0.03% among 15-45 year-olds according to Spectrum 2021 data.

### Actions

- 1 Promulgation in 2014 of a law protecting people living with HIV,
- 2 Introduction of the Generalized Health Insurance (Assurance Maladie Généralisée - AMG), which is a great help to people living with HIV.
- 3 Implementation of a national plan to eliminate mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) of HIV.
- 4 Distribution of sterile needles to prisoners.
- 5 Mobilization of funding from several technical and financial partners: WHO, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF.
- 6
  - Radiological-biological care
  - Medical care
  - Nutritional care
  - Psychological care
- 7 Implementation of awareness-raising sessions with condom distribution

### The results

- ➔ The Union of the Comoros is making significant progress in the fields of prevention and medical, psychological and nutritional care for people living with HIV/AIDS.
- ➔ HIV prevalence rates among sex workers, MSM and IDUs are very low, and remain below 1%.
- ➔ The number of new infections has fallen sharply from 26 to 18 between 2010 and 2022;
- ➔ The number of AIDS-related deaths fell from 04 to 01 between 2010 and 2022;
- ➔ The rate of condom use by sex workers at last intercourse has risen from 26% to 35.80% between 2019 and 2022;
- ➔ The rate of condom use by MSM at last sex rose from 35% to 62.5% between 2019 and 2022.
- ➔ In 2022, the number of people living with HIV on ARVs was 96, with 44 men and 52 women. According to the Global AIDS Progress Report 2020, the number of people on HIV treatment in Comoros was 17 and 78 respectively in 2010 and 2019. There has therefore been an improvement in the care of HIV sufferers on medical treatment.

### Lessons Learned

- 1 The success recorded in the fight against HIV/AIDS is the result of the mobilization of the Government, Financial and technical Partners and NGOs in terms of prevention and care.

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## Stepping up action to reduce the maternal mortality rate

### Context






Maternal mortality is a global public health issue. In Comoros, considerable efforts are being made to reduce maternal mortality to reach the SDG 3.1 target : To reduce the maternal mortality ratio to 70 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births by 2030.

### Actions

- 1 Strengthening the capacity of midwives in prenatal consultations has helped to achieve a high rate of births attended by skilled personnel.
- 2 Nutrition programs for pregnant and breast-feeding women improve women's health, the quality of breast milk and the health of babies;
- 3 The setting up of mobile clinics makes it possible to offer health care to the poorest social strata and to extend health coverage to a very wide area;
- 4 Support for the establishment and operation of youth associations for reproductive health and the fight against HIV/AIDS (ASCOBEF, AfriYan, FCAS, etc.).
- 5 Raising community awareness of the benefits of prenatal consultations and family planning contributes to improving the health of women of childbearing age through medical follow-up and reducing the average number of children per woman.
- 6 Women's education and the development of income-generating activities increasingly reinforce their autonomy, freeing them from the power of men and helping them to make decisions that are favorable to their health and the well-being of their children and families.



### The results

-  An increase in the number of hospital births. According to the 2022 MICS survey, these will reach 95.1% in 2022, compared with 76.1% in 2012 (EDS-MICS).
-  Pregnant women (64.3%) are increasingly attending the four prenatal consultations recommended by the current protocol.
-  The decline in the adolescent fertility rate from 70 per 1,000 in 2012 to 60 per 1,000 in 2022. The fertility fell from 5.1 children per woman in 1996 to 4.3 in 2022.
-  The use of modern family planning methods, although low by 2022, is helping to reduce the risk of maternal death.
-  The rate of 53 deaths per 100,000 live births is also, and above all, the result of investments in health facilities (2020-2022),

### Lessons Learned

- 1 Raising community awareness of the benefits of prenatal visits encourages pregnant women to attend hospitals more frequently, thereby significantly reducing the maternal mortality rate.
- 2 Raising community awareness of the benefits of family planning in terms of women's health, children's education and family well-being helps to reduce the number of children per woman, thereby helping to reduce maternal mortality.
- 3 Economic empowerment is a powerful lever for women's decision-making. It frees them from the power of men, leaving them free to decide how many children they want.
- 4 Extending education, by delaying the age of marriage, also reduces the average number of children per woman, increases awareness of the need for prenatal check-ups by experienced professionals, and contributes effectively to reducing maternal mortality.

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## Progressive appointment of women to decision-making positions.

### Context

Comorian traditions divide tasks between men and women: men are the head of the family, responsible for working to meet the family's needs and ensure its well-being. Women are responsible for all household tasks and other household activities. This situation, which is deeply rooted in Comorian society, has resulted in men dominating women, who have long been absent from decision-making positions.

As the percentage of women in the total population is almost equivalent to that of men, even though they account for only a third of the total civil service workforce. One of the government's ambitions in its efforts to achieve gender equality is to significantly increase the number of women in senior positions.

### Actions

- 1 The 2014 electoral code law provided for a minimum quota of one-third women in lists for communal elections and one-quarter women in the composition of Communal Offices ;
- 2 The Hadjira law on the promotion of gender in access to nominative and elective functions (2017) aims to establish gender parity in decision-making, elective and nominative positions;
- 3 The 2018 Constitution, in Article 34, recognizes women's "right of access to political bodies of local and national representation" and also provides in Article 36 for "a fair and equitable distribution between men and women" in the composition of the Government.

### The results



For the first time, a woman has been appointed governor of the island of Ngazidja, following the 2019 governors' elections, for a five-year term.



For the first time, a woman was appointed vice-governor of the Central Bank of the Comoros.



The position of Commissioner General for Planning has been entrusted to a woman for two successive presidential terms.



The position of Commissioner for Solidarity, Social Protection and Gender Promotion has always gone to a woman.



The position of Gender Adviser to the President of the Union has been entrusted to a woman.



The legislative and municipal elections of 2020 gave women access to the posts of deputy and mayor.



In hospital administration, several women hold positions as general practitioners, specialists or department heads.



Women are also active at university as lecturers, assistant lecturers and department heads.

### Lessons Learned

- 1 Passing laws and enacting them are not the only factors for success. A great deal of effort and motivation are also required to achieve convincing results.

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**Improve the production of reliable, up-to-date statistical data** for analysis and studies on public policy, as well as the ability to carry out monitoring and evaluation processes on the country's development projects and programs.

### Challenge

Achieve statistical data production by ensuring regularity of statistical production and reliability of statistical data for the preparation, monitoring and evaluation of development policies, projects and programs in the Comoros. In 2008, the Comoros National Statistical System (SSN) was diagnosed as lacking in governance of the statistical system, due to the absence of a statistical law, quality human resources, material and financial resources for the production of reliable and up-to-date statistical data, quality, coverage, analysis and dissemination of statistical data.

### Actions

- 1 Elaboration by the Comorian government of a national strategy for the development of statistics (SNDS 2008-2012, SNDS 2010-2014, SNDS 2015-2019) based on four axes: (i) Strengthening of the legal and institutional framework and coordination; (ii) Development of human, material and financial resources; (iii) Development of statistical production, improvement of quality and dissemination; and (iv) Strengthening of data access and dissemination;
- 2 Promulgation of the statistical law on the organization and regulation of statistical activities in Comoros in 2011; Two decrees implementing the law were signed in January 2014, one on the remit and operation of the National Institute of Statistics and Economic and Demographic Studies (INSEED) and the other on the remit and operation of the National Statistics Council (CNS). The CNS and INSEED are the two institutions that make up the SSN.
- 3 Carrying out evaluation missions of the national statistical system: Evaluation in 2013 (Afristat-Paris21) and Peer Evaluation in 2020 (African Union) and Carrying out the "Etats Généraux de la Statistique" in 2022.
- 6 Creation at the University of Comoros of a training programme for senior technicians in statistics, in collaboration with ENSEA in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 2015.

### The results

-  Statistical activities in the Comoros are regulated by law; On average, some fifteen senior statistical technicians are trained each year;
-  The fourth population and housing census was carried out in 2017. Three other censuses were carried out in 1980, 1991 and 2003;
-  Poverty monitoring surveys in 2014 and 2020. These two surveys were preceded by a Budget Consumption survey in 1995; a Population Perception Survey and a Comprehensive Survey in 2004;
-  Surveys to monitor women's and children's health, education, gender-based violence, etc.: Demographic and Health Surveys in 1996; Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) in 2000; Demographic and Health Surveys coupled with a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (EDS-MICS) in 2012; Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) in 2022;
-  Several surveys to monitor the epidemiological impact of Covid 19 in 2020. A study has also been carried out to determine the population and households vulnerable to the pandemic, so that they can be properly taken care of with international assistance;
-  Carry out a survey in 2021 on the importance of the informal sector in the national economy in order to better direct aid after the negative impacts of COVID 19. This survey was preceded by the 123 informal survey in 2013;
-  Creation of an Inseed website and a national platform for archiving and disseminating statistical information from services responsible for producing public statistical data, with the support of the United Nations system since 2022 (In progress).

### Lessons Learned

- 1 Improving the production and quality of the data is a long process that requires a great deal of effort and commitment from the government and its technical and financial partners.

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