

## **Background Paper on Social Issues**

### **Introduction**

1. Guinea-Bissau ranks 175 out of the 177 countries on the UNDP Human Development Index for 2007. Average life expectancy is 45 years at birth. Indeed, the 2006 National Poverty Reduction Strategy (DENARP) acknowledges that Guinea-Bissau will not achieve the MDGs by 2015 without significant policy change and intens



14. Programs which support income-generating activities will target trained youth. Full participation of all vulnerable groups in economic and social activities will require access to micro-credit funds. It will be necessary to strengthen institutions that provide and coordinate micro credit in support of income generating activities for vulnerable populations.

#### Addressing the problems of the vulnerable groups

15. The vulnerable groups are deprived of the basic needs of everyday life because of lack of income, or because of specific social or physical conditions. Such vulnerable groups include children, women, the disabled (in particular victims of land mines and AEE), the youth, war veterans and the elderly.

16. Policies for improving the living conditions of vulnerable groups include: (i) increasing access to social services like health and education, and (ii) developing programs to help vulnerable people to generate income, including micro credit and community development.

#### Partners' support

17. Guinea-Bissau is supported by bilateral/multilateral partners in all previously mentioned areas. During the November 2006 Roundtable in Geneva, many partners committed their support to the Government in implementing the DENARP. Other programs will be concluded with other bilateral/multilateral development partners. The government will ensure that these various programmes are executed for the well-being of the population.

#### Potential contribution for peace consolidation

18. Guinea-Bissau's government must be able to provide better education, better health and meet the population's expectations for a better life. These are basic human rights needs. Sustained peace consolidation depends on overcoming extreme poverty. **The poor depend on the provision of adequate education and health services for their livelihoods. Without livelihoods there can be no peace. Education and health are therefore economic assets which are crucial to peace consolidation.** The PBC can contribute to peace consolidation in Guinea-Bissau through the mobilization of resources and international support necessary to address the challenges of human development, which is vital for attaining peace and stability, through sustained investments in the health and education, as well as the youth employment sectors.

#### Conclusions

19. To reduce poverty and consolidate peace, Guinea-Bissau will need more financial and technical support for social sector development. Given the country's current financial difficulties,