



## Côte d'Ivoire: State-driven Poverty Reduction in a Context of Crisis

Navigating Between MDG  
Constraints and Debt Relief

Francis Akindès

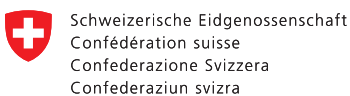
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*Left:* Store selling prefabricated bricks along the highway leading from Abidjan to Grand Bassam. *Right:* View of the “Plateau”, Abidjan’s business quarter, where public administration has most of its headquarters. (Photos by Patricia Schwaerzler, 2009)

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## Abbreviations

ADB	African Development Bank
AIODM	Alliance Internationale pour les Objectifs du Millénaire (International Alliance for the Millennium Development Goals)
APO	Accord Politique de Ouagadougou (Ouagadougou Political Agreement)
BCEAO	Banque Centrale des États de l’Afrique de l’Ouest
BNETD	Bureau National d’Études Techniques et de Développement (National Office of Technical Studies and Development)
CACE	Centre d’Action Communautaire pour l’Enfance (Children’s Community Action Centre)
CEI	Comité électoral indépendant (Independent Electoral Commission)
CIRES	Centre Ivoirien de Recherche en Science Économique et Sociale (Côte d’Ivoire Research Centre in Economics and Social Sciences)
CLCP	Cellule de Lutte contre la Pauvreté
CNO	Centre Nord Ouest (Centre North West)
CNSI	Convention Nationale de la Société Civile (National Civil Society Convention)
COGES	Comités de Gestion des Établissements Scolaires (School Management Committees)
CSRS	Centre Suisse de Recherches Scientifiques en Côte d’Ivoire (Swiss Center for Scientific Research)
DCPE	Direction de la Conjoncture et de la Prévision Économique
DSRP	Document de Stratégie de Réduction de la Pauvreté (PRSP)
ECOWAS	Economic Community Of West African States
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
EPFD	Economic Policy Framework Document
FCFA	Franc de la Communauté Financière Africaine
FDS	Forces de Défense et de Sécurité
FRCI	Forces Républicaines de Côte d’Ivoire
GBV	Gender-based violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IGA	Income-Generating Activity
ILO	International Labour Office
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INS	Institut National de Statistiques (National Institute of Statistics)
IRC	International Rescue Committee
LMP	La Majorité Présidentielle
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MFFAS	Ministry for the Family, Women and Social Affairs
NDS/MDG	Nation Development Strategy based on Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMDGR	National MDG Report

ODA	Official Development Assistance
PCAP	Post-Conflict Assistance Programme
PCEAP	Post-Conflict Emergency Assistance Programme
PCMIS	Post-Crisis Multi-sector Institutional Support
PEMFAR	Public Expenditures Management and Financial Accountability Review
PRGF	Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategies
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RGPH	Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat (General Census of Population and Habitat)
RHDP	Rassemblement des Houphouétistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SLS	Survey of Living Standards
SME/SMI	Small and Medium Enterprises/ Small and Medium Industries
TFP	Technical and Financial Partners
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session
UNO	United Nations Organisation
UNOCI	United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
UNS	United Nations System
VAT	Value Added Tax
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Context

Côte d'Ivoire is a former French colony. It gained its independence in 1960 under the leadership of Félix Houphouët Boigny (?–1993), who became the country's first president. Côte d'Ivoire lies in the inter-tropical zone of West Africa and has a surface area of 322,462 km<sup>2</sup>. It is bordered to the east by Ghana, to the west by Liberia and Guinea, to the north by Mali and Burkina Faso, and to the south by the Atlantic Ocean. Abidjan and Yamoussoukro are the economic and political capitals respectively.

Socio-demographically, the population of Côte d'Ivoire was estimated at 6,709,000 in 1975 and has undergone rampant growth ever since. It grew to 10,815,694 inhabitants in 1988 and reached 15,366,672 in 1998 – a demographic growth rate of 3.3%. The country's population is currently estimated at about 17,198,048.<sup>1</sup> The successive socio-political crises since 19 September 2002 have led to a change in the spatial distribution of the population through enormous internal displacement of people, generally from north to south. The population is divided into four major groups, which have settled in largely distinct cultural areas: the lagoon-living Akan along the coast; the forest-living Akan in the west and centre; the Mandé in the north and west; the Sénoufo in the north; the Kru in the west; and the Gür in the north-west. One must add non-Côte d'Ivoire citizens, whose proportion was evaluated at 26% of the total population in 1998.

## 1.2 Aims of the report

When it adopted the Millennium Declaration containing eight goals focussing on 18 targets and 48 indicators, the Côte d'Ivoire government committed itself to implementing development policies based on the following goals:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
2. Achieve universal primary education;
3. Promote gender equality and empower women;
4. Reduce child mortality;
5. Improve maternal health;
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
7. Ensure environmental sustainability;
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.gouv.ci/ci\\_fiche\\_1.php](http://www.gouv.ci/ci_fiche_1.php)

Ten years have now passed since the government committed itself to achieving these goals. This report therefore aims to provide an overview of how these goals have been internalised in (i) initiatives by both the state and decentralised bodies, and (ii) debates within Ivorian society.

Firstly, we shall show how relatively insignificant were the results in terms of poverty reduction, according to successive reports drawn up by the Côte d'Ivoire government in partnership with the United Nations System. To put it plainly, the public authorities appropriated the Goals very little; local councils and civil society did so even less. Secondly, we shall show how the constraints of solving the crisis and building peace affected state funding of commitments to achieving the MDGs. Lastly, we shall try to show the extent to which state strategy gave precedence to the prospect of being eligible for the Heavy Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative and so-called “pro-poor” economic reforms over potential domestic efforts to define an endogenous and realistic poverty reduction policy. From all that has been described above, we can conclude with the idea that the Bretton Woods institutions maintain a discreet control of knowledge about development through the HIPC Initiative and continue to influence the public policy options open to weak states such as Côte d'Ivoire and many other nations in sub-Saharan Africa.

## 2 Contextual Data in the Period of Commitment to the MDGs

At the time of committing itself to the MDGs, Côte d'Ivoire was plunged into political instability, affecting the process of internalising the suggested mechanisms.

### 2.1 Several periods of armed conflict (1999, 2002, 2011)

Côte d'Ivoire has been embroiled in a series of armed conflicts since the end of the 1990s. Political instability reigned from the putsch of December 1999 to the unsuccessful coup d'état on 19 September 2002, which turned into an armed rebellion that split the country in two, interspersed with spiralling violence (Akindès 2004; Akindès 2009). The November 2010 elections were supposed to bring this to an end, but instead they opened a post-electoral socio-political crisis (Bassett 2011) with even greater humanitarian consequences (Amnesty International 2011; Human Rights Watch 2011; UNOCI 2011; Strauss 2011).

This poisonous situation is simply the logical extension of a series of badly managed latent and manifest crises that have punctuated the country's history. Furthermore, the repercussions of these armed conflicts have been a major cause of institutional and structural decline<sup>2</sup> since they jeopardise the country's development achievements.

Against this backdrop of economic crisis, the political roots of this decline can be traced to the battle for the highest position in the land following the death of Côte d'Ivoire's first post-independence president, Félix Houphouët-Boigny. It was a battle between two heirs, Henri Konan Bédié and Alassane Dramane Ouattara, each considering himself entitled to succeed Houphouët-Boigny due to the legitimacy they derived from their previous offices. In 1993 the former was President of the National Assembly, while the latter, as Prime Minister when the incumbent President died, had been accused of attempting a putsch. In the confusion following Houphouët-Boigny's death, the army, under the command of the Army Chief of Staff, General Robert Guéï, supported the appointment of the President of the National Assembly as foreseen by the constitution. This episode left a profound mark on the political life of Côte d'Ivoire. The resulting tensions and the consequences of political manipulation of the concept of "*ivoirité*"<sup>3</sup> by Henri Konan Bédié to take his rival Alassane Dramane Ouattara out of the race would subsequently justify the coup led by General Guéï on 24 December 1999 to overthrow President Bédié's government.

2 We should specify that the administration in Côte d'Ivoire demonstrated the same failings as other African administrations in the sub-region, viz. corruption, delays, redundancy, etc. It did have the advantage, however, of still operating and delivering services.

3 "*Ivoirité*" is meant to be an Ivorian brand of nationalism. It is a political ideology that champions the position that state resources should be directed towards people of Ivorian extraction, i.e. people who come from a village in Côte d'Ivoire and both of whose parents belong to one of Côte d'Ivoire's recognized ethnic groups. Cf. on this subject: Dozon (2000); Akindès (2003); Marshall-Fratani (2006).

This coup marked the beginning of what was to become a recurring phenomenon in Côte d'Ivoire, i.e. parties resorting to arms in a country where social dialogue had completely broken down (Dembélé 2002). It was in this morose atmosphere that the October 2000 presidential elections were held. These elections saw both former President Bédié and former Prime Minister Alassane Dramane Ouattara stand; both their candidacies were turned down, the latter being denied Ivorian nationality under the pretext of his allegedly being a citizen of Burkina Faso by birth. This strategy was aimed at preventing Alassane Dramane Ouattara, a native of the north of the country, from running for president and drove a wedge between the people of northern Côte d'Ivoire and those in the south.

This agitation reached its logical climax in the military and political crisis that shook the country in the night of 18–19 September 2002, unleashing a wave of violence that swept through the land (Akindès 2004) and split the country down the middle, with the northern part controlled by armed rebels and the south in government hands. It is well known that some of the arms used by the rebels had been abstracted from the supplies provided and not properly accounted for over the two previous years. Yet it would seem that the rebels also drew on other sources, whose identity has not been revealed to date. The uncertain outcome of the crisis worsened the already perilous state of the national economy, with repercussions for household living standards.

The crisis then entered a phase of intense fighting before the deployment of intervention forces (Licorne and UNOCI). “Licorne” (Unicorn) was the codename given to French forces’ involvement, under French command, in peacekeeping operations in Côte d'Ivoire. It is distinct from, yet complementary to, UNOCI. During the fierce initial confrontations to regain control of certain towns (Bouaké, San Pedro, Daloa, Korhogo, Man and various others), large numbers of people fled the battlegrounds (especially those in the north, west and centre) in search of refuge in the south. They abandoned almost everything in their flight. These internal displacements had a significant negative effect on agricultural activity and the private sector in the regions they had left behind, damaging incomes and jobs as well as state revenues.

The crisis in Côte d'Ivoire was the subject of various peace deals leading up to the Ouagadougou Political Agreement that was signed on 4 March 2007 by the Ivorian President, Laurent Gbagbo, the head of the *Forces Nouvelles*, Guillaume Soro, and the President of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré. The aim of the Agreement was to restore peace in Côte d'Ivoire and to reunify the country. Throughout this time, President Laurent Gbagbo, whose term of office had expired back in 2005, had stayed in power as presidential elections were postponed six times in all. Having been so elusive for so long, the first round of presidential elections was finally held on 31st October 2010 with the aim of putting an end to the political instability and to an economic slump often explained by a situation that was “neither war nor peace”. Having expressed its frustration at a crisis resolution process that had been expensive due to its dragging on for so long, the international community was heavily involved in organising and holding these elections.

Yet immediately after 28 November 2010, the date of the second round of the presidential elections, Côte d'Ivoire entered a period of political turmoil that was even more murderous than those that had gone before. And with good reason: for four long

months, two presidents fought for control of the highest office in the land. Laurent Gbagbo, the outgoing President, was sworn in as President after having been declared the victor by the Constitutional Council with 51.45% of the votes as against 48.55% for his rival Alassane Dramane Ouattara. The military hierarchy immediately swore allegiance to him. For his part, Alassane Dramane Ouattara, the candidate of a coalition of parties, the *Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix* (RHDP), presented himself as the “elected president” of Côte d’Ivoire two days after his adversary was sworn in, basing this on preliminary results announced by the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) and validated by the United Nations crediting him with 54.1% of the vote. In the face of the Constitutional Council’s stance backed up by the army, Alassane Ouattara also took the oath “in his capacity as President”, this time in a letter addressed to the very same Constitutional Council. Then Côte d’Ivoire immediately sank into an extraordinary post-electoral crisis of rare violence. The government reinstated by the Constitutional Council embarked on a campaign to repress any sign of resistance to the new order. The toll of successive attempts to oppose it was extremely severe. While the opposition rallied around Alassane Dramane Ouattara and denounced what it saw as an unfair electoral hold-up, Laurent Gbagbo’s government organised its political defence and its military offensive around the sovereignty of the people of Côte d’Ivoire represented in the Constitutional Council’s decision.

The resulting political rift now opposed two political factions: on one side, the LMP (*La Majorité Présidentielle*) grouping loyal to Laurent Gbagbo that was now galvanised around ultra-nationalistic rhetoric depicting his opponent Alassane Dramane Ouattara as “the foreigners’ candidate”; and on the other the RHDP whose leader’s victory in the recent elections, recognised and certified by the UN via its mission in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI), had been acknowledged by the international community (UN, European Union, United States, ECOWAS, African Union). This stand-off exactly replicated the two political visions that had clashed ever since the death of Félix Houphouët-Boigny for control of Côte d’Ivoire’s destiny: on the one hand the nationalist vision embodied by Laurent Gbagbo painting France as the shadowy opponent of Côte d’Ivoire’s “second independence”<sup>4</sup> with him as leader; and on the other the vision of a Côte d’Ivoire that was more inclusive, more open to the outside world and more befitting Houphouët’s ideal that inspired it. These two visions increasingly battled it out by military means, sizing each other up before finally measuring up to each other in the capital, Abidjan. There followed 10 days of fighting between a fringe group of the *Forces de Défense et de Sécurité* (FDS), armed to the teeth for the cause and supported by militias and mercenaries, and facing them the *Forces Nouvelles* and part of the FDS united into an army re-baptised the *Forces Républicaines de Côte d’Ivoire* (FRCI) with the support of the *Licorne* forces and UNOCI. This fighting led to the capture of Laurent Gbagbo on 11 April 2011 with heavy casualties – 3,000 dead. Fighting all over the country – and especially in Abidjan – resulted in many deaths, the pillaging of public and private property, serious human rights violations and infringements of people’s dignity.

4 The ideology of the second independence was based on the rhetoric of Laurent Gbagbo and his supporters denouncing the fact that, in their view, Côte d’Ivoire was still under the French yoke, despite having won independence in 1960, and claiming that the country must at last escape the grip of the neo-colonialists. They saw the rebels as the armed wing of France and its local henchmen, and their resistance to what they considered to be a French-sponsored putsch against the state was presented as a “second independence”. For further information on this topic, cf. Akindès, Fofana and Kone (2010); Akindès and Fofana (2011); Piccolino (2012).

For four months political, economic and social life was paralysed, exacerbating the country's serious economic problems and limiting people's access to social services that had already been degraded by 10 years of socio-political crisis. Moreover, a climate of fear had descended on the country. A compilation made in May 2011 by the African Development Bank (ADB)<sup>5</sup> of primary data provided by the Ivorian authorities, the International Monetary Fund and the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) gave an overview of the consequences of the post-electoral crisis and of the international sanctions against the Ivorian regime. One of these consequences was the country's acute cash-flow problem.

Also according to the African Development Bank's report, there was a slump in the GDP growth rate due to the paralysed economy, violence in production areas and the fact that distribution networks and retail outlets could not operate properly. Growth fell to -6% in 2011 compared to rises of 2.4% and 3.8% in 2010 and 2009 respectively, which seriously reduced the progress that had been made since the signing of the APO in 2007.<sup>6</sup> Shortages in the oil and gas sectors, the standstill at the ports and airports and the problems with land and air transport caused by the conflict all negatively affected the distribution of food, and exports. The markets could not get enough supplies, leading to inflationary tensions. By the end of February 2011, year-on-year inflation was running at 5.1% compared to -0.4% in 2010. The price of some basic food products had risen by over 25% (26.5% for fish, 25.3% for oils and fats).

The political crisis also had a disastrous impact on macroeconomic indicators. On the subject of public finances: an export ban on coffee and cocoa during the first four months of 2011, the cessation of operations by companies, an exemption from paying road tax in 2011 and the closure of commercial banks all contributed greatly to a slump in public revenue. The provisional forecasts for budgeted revenue and expenditure for 2011 as a percentage of GDP are respectively 14.7% of GDP and 16.9% of GDP, resulting in a deficit of -2.3% of GDP. The corresponding ratios for 2010 were 20.3% of GDP, 22.3% of GDP and -2% of GDP respectively. Earmarked funding and the need to wipe out accumulated domestic and international arrears, including 195 billion FCFA (CFA francs) in government bonds that had fallen due in November 2010 but had not yet been paid off, opened a funding gap of 1,200.5 billion FCFA (or about 10% of GDP). This gap will continue to widen with the funding of humanitarian operations.

Regarding the **monetary situation**: The closure of the national BCEAO office (Banque Centrale des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest) and the suspension of operations by commercial banks led to the country's liquid assets drying up, with an impact on monetary aggregates. As for the external account, the current account balance is expected to have fallen, primarily due to reduced cocoa and oil exports. The accumulated arrears at the end of April 2011 amounted to something like 3.4% of GDP.

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5 Cf. Côte d'Ivoire. Country factsheet 2011-2012. <http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/C%3%B4te%20d%27Ivoire%20-%20Fiche-pays%202011-2012%20%2826%2005%202011%29.pdf>

6 The signing of this Accord facilitated the signature of a Post-Conflict Assistance Programme (PCAP) with the World Bank on 7 July 2007, a Post-Conflict Emergency Assistance Programme (PCEAP) with the IMF in August 2007, a deal with the ADB on a Post-Crisis Multi-sector Institutional Support (PCMIS) project on 28 February 2008, and the signature of a United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) plan on 4 July 2008.

In terms of **demand**: There was a substantial contraction of the various indicators in 2011. Final consumer spending showed a decline of 7% in real terms compared to 2010. This fall was slightly more marked in the private sector (–8.1%) due to a lack of cash-flow and problems with supply during the four months the crisis lasted, i.e. a third of 2011. Compared with 2010, gross fixed capital formation declined by an average of 10.7% in volume terms and 16.1% in the private sector. Altogether, investment remains very low compared to other WAEMU countries. It is 8% of GDP in 2011, but could rise to 10% of GDP in 2012–2013.

There has not yet been any reliable assessment of the impact of the 2011–2012 post-electoral crisis on public services; it is nevertheless generally accepted that it affected the capacity of the administration, most of whose facilities had been destroyed and increased poverty. According to the revised Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP, 2009–13), the country's situation is significantly degraded. According to the study, 48.9% of the population was living in poverty in 2008 compared to a mere 10% in 1985 and 38.4% in 2002; over half are unemployed.

The constraints on the state are now even greater, if one adds the effects of the last crisis to the fact that macroeconomic indicators have shown no growth, which is needed to cover the exponential cost of post-conflict reconstruction, since the 1990s.

## 2.2 An economy suffering from the socio-political crisis

This situation of increasing impoverishment seems to have settled in for the long term and breaks with two decades of strong growth for the Ivorian economy. We should remind ourselves that the economy of Côte d'Ivoire went through three main phases. The first phase lasted from 1960 to 1980. It was known as the "Ivorian miracle" and was characterised by the availability of funds and a golden age of investment (Fauré, 1982). External shocks soon revealed the fragility of this economic growth, whose causes were to be found in the imbalances in public finances (Diomandé, 1997:109.112).

The second phase lasted from 1981 to 1993. This was the period known as the "Ivorian mirage". The Ivorian economy slid into deep recession from 1980 onwards, reaching its nadir in May 1987. The state was being strangled and unilaterally suspended repayments of its foreign debt. To confront these economic imbalances the Ivorian government adopted structural adjustment programmes with help from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The first Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was implemented in 1981, the second in 1983 and the third and final one in 1986. Between 1987 and 1988, the scale of the imbalances forced the state to sign an agreement with the IMF in view of implementing a financial stabilisation plan from July 1989 to December 1990 with the aim of: (i) producing a positive primary balance of trade of at least 5% in 1993, (ii) covering an increasing share of the foreign debt in order to (iii) restore the frozen relations between Côte d'Ivoire and its creditors, and finally (iv) to gradually resolve the payment arrears that had been accumulated between 1987 and 1989 (Barry, 1991:30). This action plan also aimed to speed up privatisations, relaxing the legal and administrative framework for companies, and liberalising prices. It also foresaw structural reforms to agricultures, companies, industry and public finances. The conditionalities that accompanied these programmes brought

about a clear improvement in public finances. The accounts for 1990 recorded an overall deficit of 234.3 billion FCFA (as against 477.3 billion FCFA) in 1989, or 16.2% of GDP (Barry, 1991:31). The primary sector grew by 2.1% in 1990. The manufacturing sector also showed some improvement thanks to domestic demand and a spurt in foreign demand, especially in other countries in the sub-region. The rate of investment almost doubled in four years, rising from less than 8% of GDP in 1993 to around 15% in 1997. The balance of trade also improved significantly. The positive balance rose from 200 billion FCFA in 1993 to almost 820 billion FCFA in 1997.

The third phase of the evolution of the Ivorian economy, characterised by the devaluation of the franc CFA, started in January 1994 in countries within the FCFA zone as another instrument of the Washington consensus. This enabled Côte d'Ivoire to return to growth and to significantly reduce its overall public deficit, which fell from 353.9 million FCFA in 1993 to 122.3 billion FCFA in 1997, or from 12% to 2% of GDP. In real terms, the primary sector saw growth of +0.5% in 1994 (-0.4% in 1993). It grew by 10% and 13.7% in 1995 and 1996 respectively. Private investment, which accounted for 53% of overall investment in 1993, rose to nearly 70% in 1997, and 1,272 companies were established in Côte d'Ivoire in 1996 compared to only 292 in 1993. Overall employment increased by almost 7% in 1997, adding an extra 1% to growth since 1995.

The effects of the socio-political situation on the economy and people's living standards are evident from the macroeconomic indicators, which need to be placed in their macrohistorical context.

We should remember that the country opted in 1960 for a liberal economy based on private initiative and open borders. There was much investment in socio-economic infrastructure paid for and carried out by a dynamic agricultural sector based on the two cash crops of coffee and cocoa, which made up an average of 40% of GDP from 1960 to 1970. Over the period 1960–80 the Côte d'Ivoire economy registered average annual growth of about 7%. The cocoa and coffee production system, which combined tree crops with food crops ensured that food was available to farmers and the rest of the population.

However, between 1980 and 1993, this upturn was undermined by a slump in agricultural commodity prices that hit producers' incomes and the revenues of a state whose rampant public expenditure was widely criticised by both the international financial institutions and the political opposition inside Côte d'Ivoire, which had recently come out into the open after the transition from a one-party to multi-party democracy in 1990. To reduce the gap between public outgoings and revenues the country was subjected to structural adjustment plans by the Bretton Woods institutions with mixed results in terms of growth and economic and social progress.

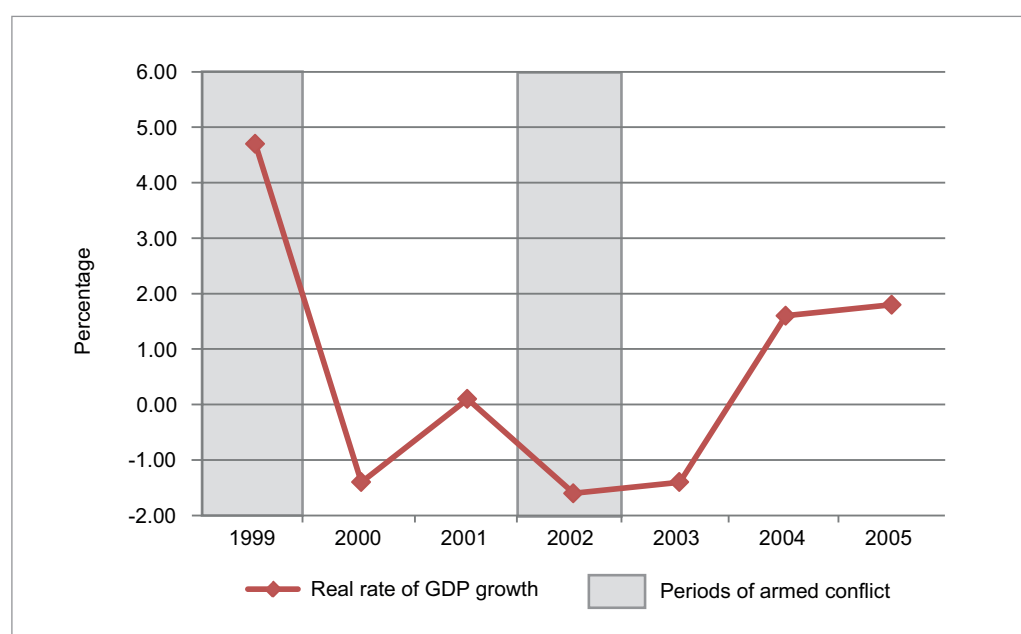
The economy has experienced particularly contrasting fortunes since late 1990. This was due to the devaluation carried out in 1994, which allowed for consistent, strong average economic growth of around 5.4% over the period 1994–8. But this growth ground to a halt, particularly in 1999 and 2000 firstly due to the delayed impact of the Asian financial crisis, which led to a drying up of outlets for the Côte d'Ivoire economy and a massive drop in commodity prices, but also because of a hardening of the politi-



cal debate from 1999 onwards, leading up to the first military coup in December that year. Thus the real growth rate of GDP, which had been 6.5% on average between 1995 and 1997, dipped to 5.4% in 1998 before slumping to 1.6% in 1999 and then -2.3% in 2000. The average annual growth rate for the period 2000–3 was negative: -1.4%.

The economic reforms implemented after the October 2000 elections managed to stabilise the economy in 2001, producing a growth rate of 0.1% that enabled the government to resume discussions with financial institutions and decide on a poverty alleviation scheme funded by the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) in March 2002 based on the PRSP.<sup>7</sup> However the socio-political crisis of September 2002 brought this progress to a halt. The growth rate actually fell from -1.6% in 2002 to -1.7% in 2003. The agreements signed with the Paris Club did not really allow the country to derive the maximum benefits from the alleviation of their foreign debt. In 2004 the growth rate rose to 1.6% and stayed at 2% until 2009.

In terms of living standards, GDP remained negative over the entire period 1999–2005. Investments from 1999 to 2005 were too low to generate strong growth. Three moments stand out during this period. In 1999 the gross annual level of investment reached 13.8%; it fell to 10.5% between 2000 and 2003, and this slump continued through 2004 and 2005, when gross investment was 9.4%. To put it plainly, the state allocated hardly any fresh investment to boosting growth, which was still falling, even if there had been some signs of improvement between 2004 and 2005 (Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Evolution of real growth rate per year from 1999 to 2005. (Source: DPCE, Public Debt, BCEAO [monetary data], 2005)

7 The Poverty Reduction Facility articulates the IMF's various programmes to support low-income countries with the fight against poverty. According to the IMF, it ensures that the countries have greater responsibility for these programmes and these are better funded. Cf. International Monetary Fund. 1999. The Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF). Operational Issues. <http://www.imf.org/external/np/pdr/prsp/poverty2.htm>

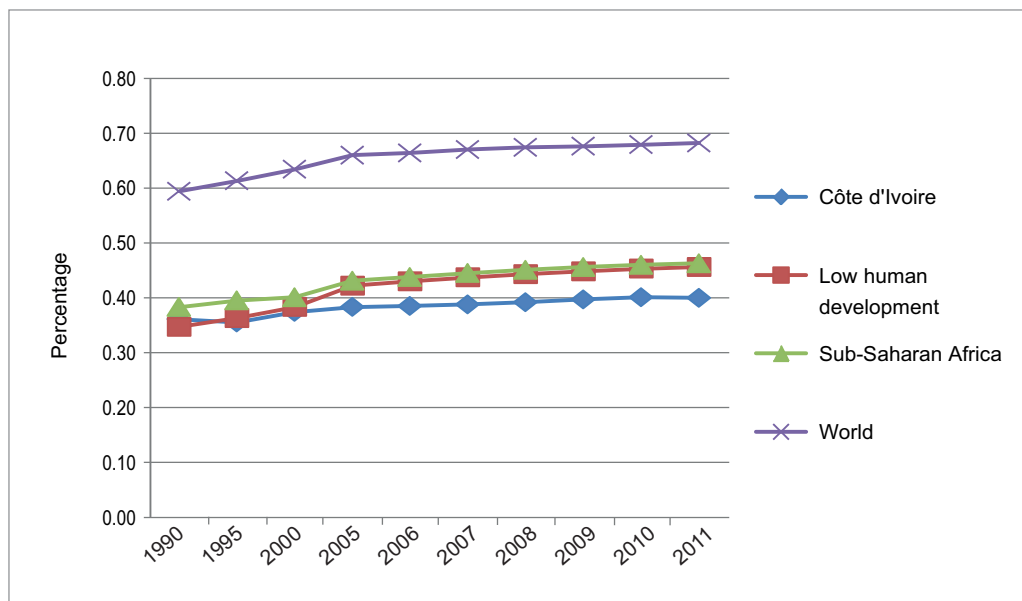
Over the same time span, domestic savings stagnated at 20.6% in 1999 before settling at 21.8% from 2000 to 2003. The rate was 17.9% for the period 2004–5, which was below the level of the three previous years. Table 1 and Figure 1 provide a clearer illustration of the evolution of these rates.

**Table 1:** Evolution of rates of growth, investment and savings from 1999 to 2005.

Period	Annual average growth rate	Annual average gross rate of investment	Annual average gross rate of domestic savings
1999	4.7%	13.8%	20.6%
2000–3	-1.4%	10.5%	21.8%
2004–5	2.0%	9.4%	17.9%

Source: National MDG Report 2010

So the combined effects of the deleterious socio-political situation and an economy long subjected to successive structural adjustment policies, in addition to significant sectoral reforms and the accompanying reduction, reorientation or withdrawal of public investment in social sectors such as health, education and social housing (Akindès 2000) had an unquestionable impact on household income and living standards. Poverty spread at alarming speed. Back in 1999, the Human Development Index had already been estimated at 42.9%, meaning Côte d'Ivoire was ranked 172nd out of 174 countries according to the Human Poverty Index (UNDP, 2002).



**Figure 2:** Human Development Index: trends from 1990 to 2011. (Source: UNDP. Country Profile: Human Development Indicators)

With the benefit of hindsight, we can see how difficult the successive socio-political crises made it for Côte d'Ivoire to extract itself from spreading poverty. The incidence of poverty went from 32.3% in 1993 under the effects of the socio-political crisis, rising to 38.4%. This fell to 36.8% in 1995. In 1998 statistical data put poverty at 33.6%, which represented a fall of 3 percentage points compared to 1995, although the effects of this drop were not really felt by ordinary people. In debates about political economy

at the time, the gap between the figures and reality was attributed either to growth being too weak to cope with social demands, or else to uneven distribution of the fruits of growth. These indicators have barely shown any sign of improvement in the UNDP World Human Development Reports (Figure 2).

These different indicators give some indication of the impact of the socio-political situation on the livelihoods of the people of Côte d'Ivoire. This was the social, political and economic context in which the Ivorian state committed itself to the MDGs.



### 3 The Côte d'Ivoire Government and the MDGs: Commitment and Methods of Internalisation

The Millennium Development Goals are crucial to economic and social development, so the states that signed the relevant declaration had to implement practical arrangements for achieving them. The aim of this section is to analyse the experience of implementing the MDGs in Côte d'Ivoire.

#### 3.1 From commitment to PRSP: the state's binary logic

The 1999 Annual Assembly of the IMF and the World Bank made it a requirement for countries wishing to obtain discretionary funding from the Bretton Woods Institutions to draw up a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). This document asked each state wanting to benefit from the HIPC (Highly Indebted Poor Countries) initiative to set out its poverty reduction and growth goals along with the strategies by which it intended to achieve them. The PRSP was a new conceptual framework that replaced the Economic Policy Framework Document (EPFD) that was the model for structural adjustment programmes. It was the frame of reference for arranging the lending operations of the World Bank and the IMF, who incidentally proposed the methodology and helped countries to design them through ad-hoc funding.<sup>8</sup> PRSPs took the place of EPFDs after 1999. It became the basis for agreements for the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF).

As a result, the Ivorian administration was confronted with two different requirements. Having committed itself to the MDGs, Côte d'Ivoire also had to comply with the World Bank's new requirements if it wanted some debt relief. Responding to this new partnership framework between the Bretton Woods institutions and poor states, the Ivorian government established a National Consultative Committee with a technical body called the PRSP Supervisory Committee, which put in place an institutional framework to pilot the PRSP in 2000. This Committee came up with the "Intermediary Poverty Reduction Strategy Document" in January 2002, which was approved in March 2002 by the Board of the IMF and the World Bank. This document evaluated

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8 The PRSP is a medium-term planning document, whose general outline was put forward by funding agencies to reduce poverty in developing countries. The PRSP contains a collection of strategic priorities, goals, 15 implementation programmes and 31 main indicators. The PRSP was drawn up mainly on the basis of quantitative data, in particular data about monetary poverty. It requires an operational and coordinated statistical information system for it to be implemented and updated. Five major principles underpin the PRSP mechanism. Poverty reduction strategies must be:

1. Piloted by the country in order to encourage the internalisation of the strategies by ensuring broad-based participation by civil society;
2. Results-based and focussed on measures that will have a beneficial impact on the poor;
3. Comprehensive, in the sense that they recognise the multi-dimensional nature of poverty;
4. Based on partnership, with the consultation and participation of the development partners (government, national stakeholders and foreign donors); and
5. Part of a long-term vision for reducing poverty.

the available data on poverty along with an analysis of the policies that the government intended to adopt to ensure macroeconomic stability and of their intended impact in terms of the poverty reduction goals it set out. The main medium-term poverty reduction goal was to lower the poverty rate from 33.6% in 1998 to 30% in 2005.

We should remind ourselves that when it committed itself in principle to drawing up a PRSP in 2000, the Ivorian administration had already taken part in the September 2000 Summit. Côte d'Ivoire adopted the Declaration, which highlighted the main challenges regarding peace, security, governance, development, a sustainable environment, human rights and democracy. After signing this Declaration, each country was required to define an operational framework that could translate the various commitments/objectives into development programmes that took account of the various targets identified and indicators needing to be addressed. Specific annual reports were to detail the implementation of the government's binding goals and give an account of the results that had been achieved. As well as detailing the efforts made, these reports are also meant as an advocacy and political monitoring tool. This makes them good instruments of political dialogue between the government, civil society and development partners, for they are the main source of data for assessing how much progress has been made.

Having made this dual commitment to the United Nations System on the one hand and the World Bank on the other, the Côte d'Ivoire government finally opted for a so-called pro-poor growth strategy, with all its attendant internal tensions. Yet, in implementing these two instruments (operationalisation framework for the MDGs and the PRSP), the state chose to kill two birds with one stone. It prioritised the drawing-up of a PRSP with its associated short-term political and financial gains at a time of scarce financial resources (loans and access to HIPC initiative) and pressing domestic social demands. However, it built the Millennium Development Goals into the process of writing the PRSP, in particular as a means of evaluating the progress and timeline for producing the milestone reports. This approach of integrating the MDGs into the PRSP is justified in the following terms:

From 2000 onwards, like other sub-Saharan African countries, Côte d'Ivoire began a process of developing a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. The government's wish to draw up such a document is also determined by its desire to have a consistent and widely accepted framework that lays out the main economic and social development priorities. This framework should make it possible to implement, monitor and evaluate effective strategies that will allow for significant poverty reduction in Côte d'Ivoire between now and 2015 in line with the Millennium Development Goals. (République de Côte d'Ivoire, 2009:1).

Political support for defining a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in 2000 was intended, domestically, not only as a public policy response to the social impact of structural adjustment schemes, and a response to the MDGs, but also a means of satisfying the prerequisites to benefit from the programme targeted at Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC). However, implementation of the policies laid out in this document was interrupted by the military and political crisis of September 2002.

The Côte d'Ivoire government's commitment to achieving the MDGs was an extension of the PRSP, whose drafting had begun in September 2000; the main MDG priorities fit perfectly with those outlined in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Like the MDGs, the PRSP aims to improve people's living conditions – and especially those of the most vulnerable – by providing: (i) healthy food in sufficient quantities; and (ii) access to drinking water, basic energy services, good quality health services, universal education, a healthy environment and a decent habitat – all in all, helping to reduce poverty. It also includes the promotion and protection of human rights, gender equality and achieving the MDGs as a path towards sustainable development. Côte d'Ivoire therefore integrated the MDGs into the PRSP. So the MDGs are clearly visible in the final second-generation strategy papers, as we shall see below.

Signed in 2007, the Ouagadougou Political Agreement (OPA) allowed Côte d'Ivoire to normalise its relations with the international financial community. This peace agreement was different from the preceding five in that it was signed directly by the protagonists with the aid of a facilitator (International Crisis Group 2007). As the result of “direct dialogue”, it seemed to be both a road map and terms of reference for all the stakeholders now involved in the process of resolving the crisis and restoring long-term peace. If this agreement gave rise to a collective optimism in Côte d'Ivoire about the imminent return of peace, among development partners it also inspired a certain amount of confidence. Even as the parties sought ways out of the crisis, fresh discussions began about development policies that might chart a path out of aid dependency. A revised 2002 poverty alleviation document was seen as a strategic framework that would now make it possible to renew the debate about national development policy. The state set about revising the document, which gave rise to a new PRSP that was approved by Yamoussoukro in December 2007 (République de Côte d'Ivoire 2009). This reference document, which now represents development policy, provides the main priorities and coordinating framework for policies to fight poverty. Drawing up this document was a pre-condition for Côte d'Ivoire being able to reach decision point in 2009.

We feel it is essential to remind readers of the procedure for countries, including Côte d'Ivoire, to qualify for the HIPC scheme. As Millet shows, this procedure is long, complex and restrictive:

A country has to negotiate many demanding steps requiring an inordinate length of time to benefit from debt relief as part of the HIPC scheme. First of all, eligible countries must, in the words of the IMF, “*face an unsustainable debt burden*” and “*have established a track record of reforms and sound policies through IMF- and World Bank-supported programs*”. It is a real obstacle course. Countries eligible for the scheme must first sign an agreement with the IMF in which they commit to implementing Washington-approved economic policies over a period of three years. This policy is based on the development of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). This document takes quite a long time to develop and is initially a provisional document. It sets out the country's economic situation and should detail the list of companies to be privatised and the economic liberalisation measures that will generate the funds to reimburse the country's debt, while also stipulating how the funds saved through debt relief

will be used, in particular to combat poverty. The contradiction is clear. Officially, the PRSP should be developed “*through a broad-based participatory process*” involving civil society in the country. (Millet, 2003)

Yet developing a PRSP is not the last of a country's troubles; the pressure does not let up.

At the end of this three-year period, the IMF and the World Bank attempt to establish whether the policies adopted by the country will enable it to pay off its debt. The criterion that was chosen to determine whether the debt might be unsustainable is the ratio between its current debt level and its annual export revenue. If this ratio is above 150%, then the debt is considered to be unsustainable [1]. In this case, the country reaches decision point and it is declared eligible for the HIPC scheme. It can then immediately begin receiving interim relief that covers only the debt servicing during the period covered by its agreement with the IMF. (Millet, 2003)

The reforms that are required of a state are consistent with the spirit of the much-criticised Structural Adjustment Plans of the 1980s:

A country that has successfully passed the decision point must then continue to implement the policies approved by the IMF and develop a finalised PRSP. This period lasts between one and three years, depending on the development of the PRSP and satisfactory implementation of key reforms agreed with the IMF. These key reforms are like a reinforced structural adjustment plan from the 1980s and 1990s. Then comes completion point. The country receives relief from its bilateral debt according to the terms of the Cologne agreement. Officially, this is 90% of its non-ODA debt prior to the deadline, but in practice this is often fairly difficult to distinguish. (Millet, 2003)

Côte d'Ivoire's PRSP was only approved in 1989, only six years before the deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. And during a workshop intended to restart the process of drawing up the PRSP in December 2007, a database known as Ivoir'DevInfo<sup>9</sup> was approved as the national tool for monitoring the PRSP and MDG indicators.

From the following section on, this study will seek to understand which public actions defined after 2000 were actually and explicitly defined as contributing to the achievement of the MDGs.

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9 Ivoir'DevInfo is an advanced database management system that makes it possible to monitor progress on the human development commitments using pre-defined indicators. This database centralizes and organizes the multi-sector statistics that are produced and collected in the development centres and the offices of ENV (Enquête Niveau de Vie) 2008. The new version of the Ivoir'DevInfo database across every sector and field of the Poverty Reduction Strategy and contains the main monitoring indicators and the metadata (data source and producer, unit and sub-population) for each sector. The information has been disaggregated for some indicators by geographical level, sex and set for the period 1990-2008. This database also includes the indicators needed to monitor the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the United Nations Development Aid Framework (UNDAF). Altogether, the Ivoir'DevInfo database covered 34 sectors with 94 indicators to monitor the PRSP in 2010.



### 3.2 Operationalising the MDGs through sectoral policies

Part of this study consisted of a survey of the technical ministries to find out from those responsible what they considered to be the initiatives that formed part of the MDGs. Generally speaking, relatively few sectoral policies or projects are explicitly presented as pertaining to the MDGs. It is only upon closer analysis that one can make out policy details that fit in with certain aspects of the MDGs.

**Box 1:** Ministry of Economy and Finances: Fund for Community Micro-projects

**Ministry of Economy and Finances**

**Project title:** Fund for Community Micro-projects

**Project duration:** 24 months

This project devised and implemented by the Ministry of Economy and Finances explicitly states that this action contributes to achieving the first Millennium Development Goal to “eradicate extreme poverty and hunger”. The aim of this economic project is to raise the income of the target population. It specifically addresses Target 1, i.e. people whose income is less than one dollar per day, which should be halved, in proportional terms, between 1990 and 2015. The programme is aimed at 18–35 year olds who are not in full-time education and have formed associations or groups of young men and women keen on carrying out an agricultural or agro-pastoral project. As a result, these organisations have started growing rice, planted permanent crops and started agro-pastoral farms.

Only two technical ministries put forward projects that referred explicitly to the MDGs. Those were the Ministry of Economy and Finances with its “Fund for Community Micro-projects” project (Box 1) and the Ministry of Water and Forests with its “Support for Park and Reserve Protection” scheme (Box 2).

**Box 2:** Ministry of Water and Forests: Support for Park and Forest Protection

**Ministry of Water and Forests**

**Project title:** Support for Park and Forest Protection

**Project duration:** 18 months

When it initiated this project, the Ministry of Water and Forests’ intention was to satisfy the requirements of MDG n° 7: “Ensure environmental sustainability”. The project fits in with Target 7B, which is to “reduce biodiversity loss, achieving by 2015 a significant reduction in the rate of loss”.

The actions that have been promoted are capacity building among the communities living on the edges of the Taï listed forest and the Marahoué National Park so that they can protect and preserve the ecosystem.

These actions are based on training and awareness-raising courses for local people. The financial investment is 482,000,000 FCFA.

The data that has been gathered in relation to these projects is insufficient for any critical analysis of the implementation methodology of these projects.

If the PRSP and the prospect of completing the stages leading to completion point mobilise the efforts of the public authorities, for whom the reference to the MDGs is only of secondary importance, as a development partner, UNDP launched a number of schemes to ensure that the MDGs were better appropriated (Table 2). It would seem that UNDP attempted, through various programmes, to encourage the Ivorian government as far as possible to build the MDGs into its national reconstruction policies. To this end it launched a project called “Support for awareness-raising and education about the Millennium Development Goals” with the stated aim of establishing a coherent and coordinated strategy to educate people, put into practice and appropriate throughout Côte d’Ivoire the objective of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The main aim of this strategy was to raise awareness about the MDGs, but it was also a matter of establishing the close links between these Goals, the PRSP, the UNDAF and the national development schemes listed in the Programme of Cooperation between UNDP and the government. To put it plainly, this strategy is designed to make it easier for the country to appropriate the MDGs by involving people at the grassroots, civil society, research centres and academics, and the government, all of whom stand to benefit the most from it. UNDP is far more active in the field of the MDGs than Ivorian public bodies are.

**Table 2:** List of MDG-related projects

Name	Status	Duration
Project of awareness-raising and education about the MDGs	Project completed	November 2006–December 2007
PRSP/MDG, Component 1: Institutional support to build capacity in planning, coordinating and monitoring/evaluating national and local poverty reduction measures	Project ongoing	2009–2013
PRSP/MDG, Component 2: Support for more diversified activities for communities, women and young people and support for the development of local micro-enterprise	Project ongoing	2009–2013
Perpetuation of school canteens: PIP/CS	Project ongoing	1999–?
National HIV coordination	Project ongoing	N/A
Restoration of the food gene pool in Côte d’Ivoire	Project ongoing	May 2007–May 2009
Urban security support programme (PASU)	Project ongoing	November 2003–December 2007
Sub-programme for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Natural Resource Management (PGDRN)	Project ongoing	2009–2013
Project for the rehabilitation of tourist and research infrastructure in the Tai National Park	Project ongoing	N/A

Source: UNDP

The UNDP says that its programmes known as the “Poverty Reduction and MDG Support Programme” (PSRP/MDG) are based on retrospective analysis of the earlier schemes in order to target UNDP interventions by taking account of the country’s poverty reduction priorities laid out in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and the associated priorities for supporting UNDAF over the period 2009–13 by concen-

trating on UNDP's comparative advantages. UNDP divides its Poverty Reduction Support Programme/MDG into three main components: (1) Institutional support to build capacity in planning, coordinating and monitoring/evaluating national and local poverty reduction measures; (2) Support for more diversified activities for communities, women and young people and support for the development of local micro-enterprise; and (3) Improving access to drinking water, power and sustainable natural resource management.

It would seem that the state and UNDP, as the main technical partner on the issue of the MDGs, do not have a sufficiently clear shared vision of a common strategy for achieving the MDGs. The actions that are presented by the technical ministries as a contribution to achieving the MDGs are not the same as those listed by UNDP. The fact that they do not cite the same actions, as well as the rapprochement of actions that are counted as contributing to the MDGs strikes us as a sign of a lack of coordinated monitoring of progress on the MDGs. We have also noted the lack of real coordination between the actions the state regards as being pro-MDG schemes and UNDP's actions in the field. Apart from the media's enthusiasm for the MDGs in the early 2000s, everything points to the fact that the Ivorian government and the United Nations System have not really adopted a joint and rigorous framework for monitoring the MDGs.

At a sectoral level, the small-scale nature of the initiatives and their lack of real reference to the MDGs are an indication of how little they have been appropriated by the state and its administration. They do, however, seem more sensitive to signals from the World Bank that might accelerate the benefits of the HIPC scheme. Interviewees in the administration commonly cited a lack of resources to justify the fact that there was little reference to the MDGs. However, it is the progress that has been achieved – as presented by the institutions responsible for monitoring the scheduled activities – that is more striking than any indicators of the administration's estimated sensitivity to the MDGs at the beginning of the project.

In the Ivorian state's political economy, a more politically attractive scheme such as the HIPC prioritises the PRSP – and more specifically the stabilisation of the macroeconomic framework that is consubstantial with it – over the MDGs as a guiding philosophy for public action. However, new situations related to the socio-political context of crisis have also influenced how the state has gone about internalising the MDGs. Although the requirements of the PRSP hardly conflict with the state's commitment to the MDGs, the new demands of lifting the country out of the crisis and consolidating peace have been added to the constraints of stabilising the macroeconomic environment. These two factors now seem to be weighing on the decision-making processes of the Ivorian government that has been undermined by the socio-political crisis caused by a series of armed conflicts. It is worth reminding ourselves that the protagonists signed a peace agreement (the Ouagadougou Political Agreement) to end the crisis, whose goal was to restore state authority and social peace. It is therefore logical that the final revised 2009 PRSP takes account of this newly restored situation of peace (République de Côte d'Ivoire, 2009). The PRSP identified the need to end the long socio-political and military crisis once and for all as the first critical challenge that needed to be met. Prioritising this new challenge of consolidating peace, which

also requires the establishment of an electoral process, comes at a price and involves some budgetary adjustments in a context of scarce resources. In the face of such re-defined priorities and the need to finance peace and macroeconomic reforms, social investment comes second.

The first Report to account for the implementation of the PRSP, which came out in July 2010 (Conseil National de Suivi du DSRP, 2010), is explicit enough about the hierarchy of priorities for the Ivorian state's economic policy after the Ouagadougou Political Agreement. It sought to convince the Bretton Woods institutions of the efforts the Ivorian state had made to meet the challenges posed simultaneously by ending the socio-political crisis, getting the budget under control and social development. This Report highlights the reasoning behind the arbitration of priorities in a state such as Côte d'Ivoire, which is already forced to adopt budgetary austerity but is invited to share its limited resources between the investments needed to re-establish peace and basic social services. We should keep in mind that the main political concern of the second half of the 2000s was the organisation of elections – postponed several times – against a backdrop of community tension. Holding elections was important to the state as part of a return to political normality, but also and especially because it was the precondition for the resumption of suspended cooperation agreements. This resumption would enable Côte d'Ivoire to start mobilising resources on the international financial markets again.

It is clear that the structure of the report on the progress made in implementing the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, which had only been developed a year after the country had reached decision point, i.e. 2010, takes account of the economic constraints and therefore reflects the order of priorities. Of the six main work areas by which the Ivorian state attempted to report on the efforts it had made, the results of four of these work areas seem to us to give a faithful account, not just of the impact of the necessity to end the crisis, but also of the tension between the need to stabilise the macroeconomic environment and the allocation of resources for actions to consolidate peace, both of these in competition with the need for social investments.

In fact, in this Report, one notes that consolidating peace, the safety of people and property, and the promotion of good governance are presented as the top priorities, and therefore the first focus the government reported on. *In this first main work area, there are five points* that form the substance of the actions undertaken to end the crisis. *In the first point*, particular emphasis was placed on: a) the efforts the state had made to encourage people to register as citizens as part of an operation to reconstruct these registers; b) restarting the process to produce identity cards; and lastly c) registering people on the electoral roll. Action was also taken to help with the rehabilitation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) and to support war victims, applied research, education, income-generating activities, social mobility, and national dialogue. *The second point* concerns restoring the state's authority in Centre-North-West (CNO) areas that had previously been occupied by the rebels. This includes the deployment of public administration and, above all, the return of prefectural staff<sup>10</sup>, financial admin-

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10 In the country's administrative structure, prefects are the state's local representatives.

istration and tax employees, as well as legal and penitentiary staff. *The third point*, which complements the second, calls for security to be restored nationwide with the redeployment of 8,000 policemen. *The fourth point* relates to the national programme for the rehabilitation of ex-combatants and community rehabilitation. *The fifth point* refers to the promotion of good governance in public administration. Under work area n° 1, which involves consolidating peace, the safety of people and property, and the promotion of good governance, expenditure in 2009 amounted to 74.98 billion FCFA out of a forecasted 130.85 billion FCFA, an absorption rate of 57.3%. The effective contribution of development partners to covering the cost of activities in Work Area 1 was evaluated at around 13.56 billion FCFA.

Work Area 2 was related to stabilising the macroeconomic environment, which presupposes better economic governance. The state, in accordance with its commitments, strove to show itself to be effective and convincing in its compliance with orthodox rules. To do this it has been proactive by initiating several structural and budgetary reforms, particularly in the areas of public administration, the coffee and cocoa sector, energy, and the business environment. The Report states that these reforms have had “*encouraging results*”. Thus, to prove its desire to put in place “good economic governance”, one of the requirements it must meet to be eligible for the HIPC scheme, the state presented its achievements in terms of a real economic growth rate of 3.8% in 2009. The public finances also showed a fall in expenditure of 8.6 billion FCFA compared to the debt relief programme in spite of the fact that the cash-flow situation remained tight throughout 2009. State expenditure amounted to 2,291.1 billion FCFA. The state’s revenue and expenditure resulted in a negative budgetary balance of 171.2 billion FCFA, which represents 1.6% of GDP compared to the expected 1.3%. The state also presented a monetary situation to document its achievements; it is characterised by changes in the balance of payments and foreign credit. The overall balance of payments for 2009 rose by 127.7 billion FCFA, which corresponded to an increase in foreign credit compared to its 2008 level. This foreign credit amounted to 1,149.1 billion FCFA at the end of December 2009, having risen by 127.7 billion FCFA compared to December 2008.

Work Area 3 is related to “Job and wealth creation by providing support to rural communities and promoting the private sector as the driving force of growth”. For this work area the Report adds: “The achieved results are unsatisfactory with regard to the commitments made.” Yet, according to the same report, effective expenditure on work area 3 for the year 2009 was 105.03 billion FCFA, or a spending rate of 67.87%. This expenditure is divided up as follows: 72.9 billion FCFA on infrastructure and transport (an absorption rate of 63.5%), 21.14 billion FCFA on farming, nutrition and fisheries, 8.2 billion FCFA on culture, 1.7 billion FCFA on trade, 972 million FCFA on industry and the private sector, and 22 million FCFA on ICT.

Work Area 4 covers the “Improvement of access to and quality of basic social services, environmental protection, greater gender equality and social security.”

The prioritisation of restoring peace over social development shows the imbalance between these two dimensions in the Ivorian macroeconomic context. And the adjustments to these macroeconomics presented above give an indication of the practices

and thinking of a state that is already under financial pressure and now confronted with having to manage the fallout from armed conflict. It is clear that the MDGs as such are not ignored in these priorities. Yet, in successive governments' orders of priorities, they have constantly had to compete with the demands of budgetary austerity, and with new economic or "pro-poor" growth policies. These demands limit social investment.

Like many other states, Côte d'Ivoire thought it was politically and diplomatically correct when signing up to the MDGs. A sign that it is serious about this commitment is that it regularly produces reports about the efforts it is making and that progress can be seen.

Between 2000 and 2010, Côte d'Ivoire produced two annual reports (the first in 2003 and the second in 2010) to inform national and international opinion about the progress made towards the goals it had set.

### 3.2.1 The institutional framework for producing the national reports

Two assessments across the country provided information about the achieved results. How are they structured and what can be expected of them?

#### **The 2003 Report**

The writing of this report was jointly supervised by the Côte d'Ivoire Ministry of Planning and Development and by the Coordinating Office for Operational Activities of the United Nations System in Côte d'Ivoire. It was coordinated by a panel of experts from (i) the Ministry in charge, (ii) the *Cellule de Lutte contre la Pauvreté* (CLCP) – Permanent Secretariat of the PRSP, and (iii) the UNDP and the World Bank. The report was finalised by a small group whose members were drawn from the aforementioned institutions with some additional experts from specialised institutions such as the National Institute of Statistics (INS). As is noted in its introduction, this report, designed primarily as a framework for consultation between the government, civil society, the private sector and the development partners, "aims, by means of relevant indicators, to measure the progress made towards achieving the objectives so as to [...] better tackle the structural and economic constraints that face the country in its development efforts". To do this the eight Millennium Development Goals were examined closely, starting with the targets for each goal, which are the performance indicators by which progress is measured, as are the situation, the trends and the related challenges – and, in view of the preceding points, the priorities for development aid.

To put it plainly, the report is presented so that the challenges related to each target reveal the main priorities for intervention for the state authorities and the expectations of development partners in terms of international solidarity that would seem to be the ninth MDG.

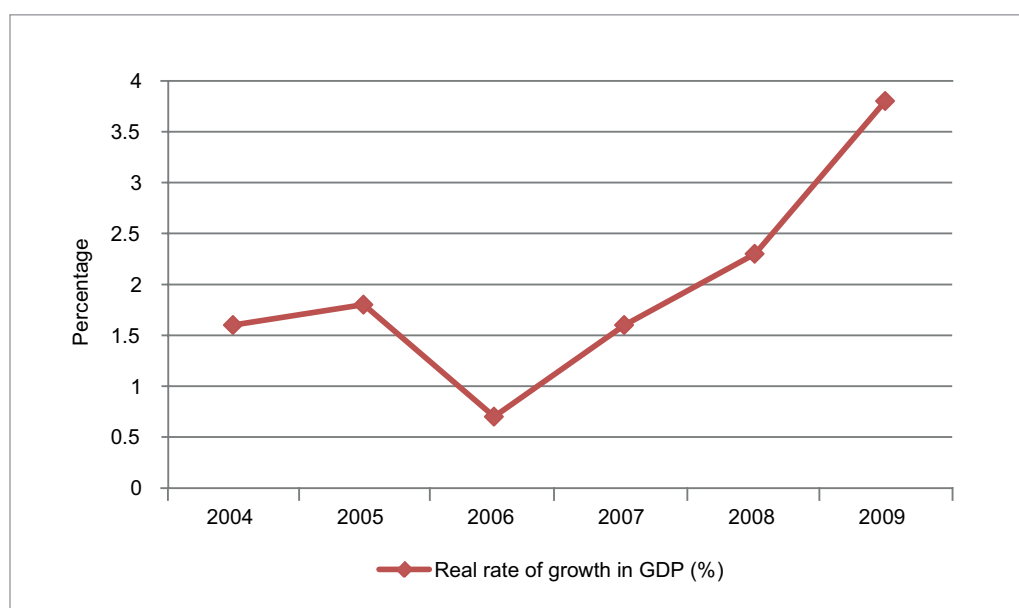
Given the special situation in Côte d'Ivoire since 19 September 2002, the first report covers the period 2002–3. What is more, an October 2003 directive from the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) regarding the writing of national MDG reports stipulated the year closest to 1999 was chosen as the baseline for the study when that year's data (1999) was unavailable.

### The 2010 Report, 10 years after the government signed up

10 years after the adoption of the Millennium Declaration and five years before the 2015 deadline, Côte d'Ivoire produced its second National MDG Report (NMDGR) in 2010. To draft this Report the Côte d'Ivoire government retained the same team as in 2003 with the United Nations System (UNS) and the Technical and Financial Partners (TFP). This report carried on from the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) that covered the period 2009–13 and was aligned with the MDG targets. A lot of information and statistical data from the results of the various national surveys and routine data collected from the “lead Ministries for the MDGs” were used for the writing of this report.

It should be remembered that the 2010 MDG Report was the second produced by Côte d'Ivoire, after the 2003 Report. It deals with data covering the period 2004–9. It is also important to describe the socio-political context without forgetting the country's macroeconomic situation.

At the time of writing of the second Report, Côte d'Ivoire was still going through the so-called “end of crisis” phase that had been ushered in 2007 with the signature of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and whose focal point was the holding of the 2010 elections. As for the state of the national economy, it had changed in 2009 in an international climate marked by a general fall in commodity prices. Nonetheless, the economy of Côte d'Ivoire had benefited from the country's improved socio-political, economic and financial situation. There was actually a recorded rise in the growth rate, increasing from 1.6% in 2004 to 3.8% in 2009 despite the international financial crisis of 2008 and 2009 (Figure 3). This favourable national environment, coupled with the healthy state of the country's major cash crops, mining and oil production, was the driving force behind a real economic growth rate of 3.8% in 2009.



**Figure 3:** Evolution of the main macro-economic indicator. (Source: DCPE, Public Debt, BCEAO [monetary data])

In line with the social priorities of the state budget, investment expenditure reached 334.3 billion FCFA, up only 14.7 billion compared to 2008. Moreover, debt restructuring and reduction following decisions on the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative in March 2009 meant that payments to service the country's debt were 168.4 billion FCFA, down 13.5 billion FCFA in 2008 and 52 billion on the programme's forecasts. The stabilisation of public finances continued in 2009, including (i) quicker repayment of VAT credits to private operators, (ii) no financial intervention by the state in state banks, and (iii) the passing of a law settling the 2008 accounts by the revenue court before the presentation of the 2010 budget.

The second report was the fruit of work done by eight MDG groups established and coordinated under the leadership of the MDG sectoral ministries (Table 3). This approach made it possible for all those involved to appropriate the various MDG objectives. The 2003 and 2010 Reports mention the use of a participatory approach. This approach included actors from the administration, local authorities, the private sector and civil society, as well as representatives of the United Nations System (UNS) and of the Bretton Woods institutions. The additional clauses in the second guidance document on writing the National MDG Report drawn up by the United Nations served as a basis and aid in this work.

**Table 3:** Lead ministries for the MDGs

Different MDGs	Lead Ministries
1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	Ministry of State, Ministry of Planning and Development, Ministry of Agriculture
2. Achieve universal primary education	Ministry of National Education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women	Ministry for the Family, Women and Social Affairs
4. Reduce child mortality	Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene
5. Improve maternal health	
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	
7. Ensure environmental sustainability	Ministry of the Environment
8. Develop a global partnership for development	Ministry of Economy and Finances

This work made it possible to: (i) establish the availability of data; (ii) fill in the progress indicators; (iii) make a diagnosis of the state and trends shown by the indicators; (iv) recognise the amount of progress made towards achieving the targets and goals; (v) review the impact of the development policies and strategies that had been implemented; (vi) evaluate the amount of funding allocated to the strategies, actions and interventions; and (vii) define the challenges, development opportunities and mechanisms for coordinating the systems for producing statistical data.

The suggested approach to producing the second NMDGR was structured in five main phases as follows:



### **Phase 1: Collecting data**

A review of statistical data established the availability of data. 43 of the 60 international progress indicators could be filled in.

### **Phase 2: Preparing drafts for each MDG**

The work of the MDG group was led by eight lead Ministries for the MDGs (see Table 3 above). First drafts were made and subsequently compiled and distributed to all the national actors for their opinions and comments. This meant that from 14 May 2010 onwards each group began to: (i) collect all the additional data required to find out the state of the indicators; (ii) analyse changes in the key indicators and problems in ensuring they were produced regularly; and (iii) interpret the progress made by highlighting the factors of success or failure for the implementation of the strategies and the financing of the actions.

### **Phase 3: Finalising the NMDGR**

A small group of experts made up of MDG members went on a technical retreat to Grand Bassam from 26 to 28 June 2010. They examined all of the drafts produced by each MDG group and checked that they included existing and past national sectoral priorities and policies, as well as the capitalisation of the development partners.

### **Phase 4: Distributing the document and including comments**

The draft NMDGR was sent to the UNS offices and to the regional UNDP MDG Team Support office in Dakar on 16 July 2010 for their comments, which were then worked into the document.

### **Phase 5: Raising awareness and distributing the NMDGR**

A series of publicity campaigns and public discussion meetings were planned to integrate the MDGs into sectoral and local action plans as a means of advocacy to allow all levels of society to appropriate the MDGs.

Since the MDGs were integrated into the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, it can be seen from the implementation of the programmes detailed in the PRSP whether or not they have actually been carried out. Thus, this National Development Strategy based on the attainment of the MDGs (NDS/MDG) became the *de facto* national development policy, having been drafted using planning tools and models inspired by the United Nations System – to be precise, UNDP – but then adapted to the national situation.

#### **3.2.2 Governmental self-assessment of achieving the MDGs**

The government's main goal is to bring the poverty rate back down from 48.9% in 2008 to its level before the 1999 crisis – 33.6% – by 2013, the year in which the PRSP is due to be reviewed at the halfway stage. Note that the observation period for the revised PRSP runs from 2009 to 2013. These efforts should lead to a halving of poverty, reducing it from 32.3% in 1993 to 16% by 2015. The government of Côte d'Ivoire set itself ambitious targets after receiving approval for the PRSP from the Bretton Woods institutions in 2009 and thus reaching decision point in the HIPC initiative. It decided to put into effect a growth policy to fund policies aimed at improving the living condi-

tions of the populace. An annual economic growth rate of 7% was therefore projected for the period 2009–15. From the government's point of view, this growth process was to be underpinned through direct support to the poorest sections of society by establishing a social security safety net.

So what do the MDG Reports show?

### **Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**

The 2003 Report noted two targets: “(i) Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of the population whose annual income is below the national poverty threshold; (ii) Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of the population suffering from hunger”.

The 2010 Report detailed and divided these targets into three: (i) Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of the population that has an income of less than one dollar a day; (ii) Guarantee full employment and enable every person to find a fitting and productive job (targeting two groups: women and young people); and (iii) Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of the population suffering from hunger.

The 2010 Report only revealed seven years later that during the period 1993–2008, **the proportion of the population living below the national poverty threshold had, instead of falling, actually risen considerably from 32.3% in 1993 to 48.9% in 2008.** The ratio of employment to population, for its part, has fallen steadily, a sign of the increasing difficulty of creating jobs. It dropped from 66.5% in 2000 to 57.6% in 2007. This could be explained by: (i) the worsening business climate in the country since the beginning of the crisis as major companies moved away and international institutions closed down their headquarters due to the armed conflict and its repercussions; (ii) the lack of investment; and (iii) steep and largely uncontrolled population growth<sup>11</sup>. On the question of full employment the report concludes: “The evolution of the indicators reveal a not very encouraging trend as far as achieving the goal is concerned.” (République de Côte d'Ivoire, 2010:24).

On the nutritional front, the 2003 Report notes that national surveys carried out between 1993 and 2002 indicate that the percentage of children under five that are underweight has fallen by 2 points. It went from 23.6% in 1993 to 21.7% in 2002. Over this period, more than one under-five out of five suffered from malnutrition. This figure is generally stable, with a slight downward tendency. The proportion supposedly fell from 23.6% in 1993 to 20.2% in 2008. The 2010 Report noted hardly any change in this area. The report points out that the nutritional situation worsened in northern Côte d'Ivoire, over the same period (30.7% and 25%). The government is said to have tried to resolve some of these difficulties through specific nationwide projects. But according to the 2010 Report, (i) the lack of effectiveness and synergy between the actions undertaken and (ii) the limited scale of the interventions meant that there was little substantial reduction in malnutrition at national level.

<sup>11</sup> The most recent Census of Population and Habitat dates back to 1998. Political decisions are largely made on the basis of statistical projections. The Côte d'Ivoire government is considering correcting this gaping lack of statistical data as a reliable tool for decision-making by carrying out a general population census in 2012 to update the country's socio-demographic data.

## **Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education**

In terms of education, in the 2003 Report the Côte d'Ivoire government had stuck to the idea of allowing every boy and girl to complete a full cycle of primary education by 2015.

In the 2003 Report, the authorities note that the net percentage of children in full-time education had risen from 48.8% in 1993 to 56.5% in 2002, which represents an increase of almost 8 percentage points over this period. The completion rate for primary schooling stagnated at around 47% over the same period. As for the literacy rate of 15–24 year olds, it fluctuated around 60% between 1993 and 2002.

However, the 2010 Report stated that there had been little change in the net percentage of children in full-time education between 2002 and 2008 (56.5% to 56.1%). As for the completion rate for primary education, it had risen after the aforementioned fall. The literacy rate for 15–24 year olds is said to have improved between 1993 and 1995 before falling away after this date (58.9% in 2002 compared to 52.8% in 2008).

The 2010 Report concludes that progress by children in primary education is too slow to achieve the goal in the remaining five years to 2015.

## **Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women**

Target 3 foresees the eradication of the disparities between the sexes in primary and secondary education by 2005 if possible, and at all levels of education by 2015 at the latest.

The goal here was to correct the following situations: (i) improve equality between the sexes in primary education, which had been 0.88 (i.e. 88 girls per 100 boys) between 2006 and 2008 and recorded as 0.81 in 2000; (ii) correct the low proportion of women employed in the sector, even though their numbers had grown from 20% in 1998 to 22.3% in 2002; and (iii) Increase the low but growing proportion of woman on decision-making bodies<sup>12</sup>.

The 2010 Report highlights the efforts made to improve equality between the sexes that have had some results, primarily at institutional level. A national “Gender” committee was established within the Ministry for the Family, Women and Social Affairs (MFFAS) in 2006. Its main mission is to monitor fair and equal relations between men and women and to coordinate national action on gender and gender violence. Gender units have also been created in the technical Ministries, 14 of which are up and running. At operational level, there is now an environment favourable to fighting gender-based violence (GBV).

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<sup>12</sup> 8.9% of the Members of the Parliament in place since 2001 are female, compared with 4.6% and 8% for the 1990 and 1995 Parliaments. The number of women in the government increased from 2005 (16.6%) to 2010 (57.5%).

**Goal 4: Reduce child mortality**

*Target 4A: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate*

Performance indicators supposedly show positive progress towards this target. However, this progress is not enough to reach the goals by 2015.

**Goal 5: Improve maternal health**

*Target 5A: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio*

*Target 5B: Achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015*

The available data showed an upward trend for all maternal health indicators between 1998 and 2008. This positive trend could be largely down to the essential role played by the agencies of the United Nations System and other partners of the health system. As it happened, Côte d'Ivoire's cooperation programmes with its development partners (2003–7) were mostly converted into humanitarian aid programmes, with interventions focussed on reproductive health in order to prevent too steep a decline in these indicators.

**Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases**

*Goal 6A: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS*

*Goal 6B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it*

The crisis that has afflicted the country for over a decade has disrupted the national response system. The estimated prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the population went from 6.9% in 2000 to 3.7% in 2008 according to data in the UNGASS report. The number of patients receiving ARV treatment grew from 2,473 in 2002 to 51,820 in 2008 and then 72,001 in 2009. The proportion of people at an advanced state of HIV infection with access to anti-retroviral treatment practically doubled between 2006 and 2009, going from 21.3% in 2006 to 31.6% in 2008 and 41.2% in 2009.

The 2010 Report describes generally satisfying progress in terms of indicators. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS would appear to be falling and the number of people receiving anti-retro viral (ARV) treatment rising. These results are in part due to the growing supply of prevention and care services. With the assistance of technical and financial partners and civil society, communication campaigns pleading for a change in behaviour as well as promoting tests and contraceptive use have now spread to all corners of the country. Counselling, testing and preventing mother to child transmission (PMTCT) services have been progressively integrated into health facilities.

**Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability**

*Target 7A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources*

**Observation:** Côte d'Ivoire's forest coverage consists of listed forests, national parks, reserves and rural forestry estates. The most recent survey of forest resources, carried out by the FAO in 2005, recorded forest coverage of 6,380,000 ha or 19.8% of the country's total area. The slight change compared to 1990 (19.0%) is a result of the first reforestation campaigns to rehabilitate state-owned forests, the 1994 forestry reforms and a new approach to forestry policy adopted in 1999. Despite all these measures, local people are encroaching on the country's forests and reserves, and this contributes significantly to their destruction.

The 2010 Report emphasises the particularly encouraging results in this sector. Continuing efforts and the implementation of the National Reforestation Programme since 2005 should make it possible to reach a rate of 20%, or 6,450,000 ha, by 2015.

**Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development**

In Côte d'Ivoire, the overall trend in the proportion of official development assistance (ODA) devoted to basic social services is relatively low. During the period 1991–2007, the value of this indicator remained below the 20% threshold set at the World Social Development Summit in Copenhagen (1995). The level of ODA allocated to social actors has rebounded, though, since the improvement in the socio-political situation with the signature of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement (in March 2007) and lay at 50% in 2008 and 2009.

Côte d'Ivoire has shown good results over the last two years relative to the Copenhagen benchmark (1995). The major challenge is to maintain this level in the years to come. The evolution of the ODA indicators is a general reflection of the direction of national policy on development aid.

After analysis, one realises that by integrating the MDGs into the PRSP that now represents national development policy, the Côte d'Ivoire government has internalised them as a tool and even attempted to put its commitments into action by matching them as closely as possible with the priorities, and also the conditionalities, for gaining access to international funding. But was this internalisation of the MDGs participatory, as good practice would recommend? An analysis of how this philosophy has been adopted at other levels of society will enable us to judge whether they were really put into operation in a participatory manner.



## 4 Experiences of Internalising the MDGs by Non-governmental Actors

The term “civil society” has been very much in vogue in Africa since the 1990s under the impulse of bilateral and multilateral development partners, whether these partners be funding or humanitarian agencies. This idea of promoting civil society had been accompanied by a desire to limit the influence of states that had been discredited by corruption and, above all, by their inability, over a period of thirty years, to promote sustainable development. This “civil society” fad also coincided with a wide-ranging process of decentralisation with the aim of bringing decision-makers closer to the citizens. After thirty years of centralised administration, under pressure from funders states are now being forced to forge synergies with local authorities and what these are able, in an ideal situation, to produce in terms of civil society organisations. The MDG programme has also adopted this approach through the planned inclusion of local authorities and civil society in their strategy for countries that have signed up to the MDGs.

Tiassalé is one of the six African towns that were selected to trial the MDGs at local level. How was this selection made at local level, and what are the results of this experience?

### 4.1 The MDG pilot project in the town of Tiassalé

#### 4.1.1 History and context of the initiative

##### **History**

To have any real development impact the MDGs must also be appropriated and implemented by grassroots organisations, local government authorities and decentralised state structures. This makes it essential that the evaluation process of what is needed to achieve the MDGs is also trialled and translated into sufficiently detailed operational targets. A move towards greater decentralisation in the new Constitution in 2000 allows for this kind of experiment.

We should remind ourselves that local councils and regional authorities were enshrined in the 2000 Constitution. The legal framework for decentralisation was specified further in 2001.

Three laws were passed on 9 August 2001: Law n° 2001-476 on the general organisation of territorial administration; n° 2001-477 regarding the organisation of departments; and n° 2001-478 defining the status of the District of Abidjan.

These were followed by various other laws including Law n° 2003-208 of 7 July 2003 on the transfer and sharing of state powers to and with the local authorities; and n° 2003-489 of 26 December 2003 on the financial, fiscal and property powers of local authorities.

These bills enshrine the complete “communalisation” of Côte d’Ivoire, encompassing every rural area and now covering the entire country. They introduced two additional levels of decentralisation – the department and the region – which will have powers that are precisely stipulated by law n° 2003-208. In October 2005, the government embarked on the final phase in the process of “communalisation” by authorising the creation of 520 new local municipalities. Five criteria determined the choice of the new municipalities: (i) the “community of interest” – “the main town of the municipality ought to be the main town of a rural area or the main town of a canton surrounded by villages that identify with it because they have the same interests”; (ii) accessibility; (iii) population – the main town must have at least 1,000 inhabitants and the area of authority of the new municipality must encompass at least 4,000 inhabitants; (iv) economic stimulus – the municipality’s main town must be able to provide stimulus for economic development through its infrastructure; and, lastly, (v) distance – the average distance between two main towns must be 10 kilometres. Decentralisation was seen as having a developmental vocation and turned municipalities into the relevant institutional framework for decision-making that was rooted in the real life of the municipalities and likely to support development-oriented initiatives and interactions.

This is the perspective from which we should interpret the voluntarist approach of the Ivorian state, which involves providing some proof of local ownership of the MDGs, as was suggested to all the countries that promised to implement this programme. The town of Tiassalé put itself forward as a trial site and the government also committed itself to experiment with “localising the MDGs” in Tiassalé in partnership with non-governmental organisations such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), UN-Habitat, the Bureau National d’Études Techniques et de Développement (BNETD) and Tiassalé town council, with the support of the Institut National de la Statistique (INS).

From the very beginning, this pilot project was an integral part of the process of decentralisation and that of boosting town and country planning policy. As such, it was intended to help to establish the system of reference in Tiassalé for each of the eight goals to allow the drafting of a local Strategic Development Plan with participation by all the stakeholders. But how did Tiassalé become a local testing ground for the MDGs?

### **Context**

The municipality of Tiassalé was chosen from among a number of sites around the country at the end of a selection process. Several advantages spoke in its favour: the availability of local socio-demographic and economic data, the existence of ongoing poverty reduction projects/programmes, and the interest shown by the local authorities in partnerships for sustainable development.

The town is located in the Lagoon Region of southern Côte d’Ivoire. It covers a total area of 434 hectares and is situated 125 km north-west of the city of Abidjan, the country’s economic capital. Tiassalé has a dozen neighbourhoods and used to be a colonial centre and trading hub. Its geographical situation makes it easy to reach as well as economically influential. It has, however, seen its economic and strategic importance wane with the construction of the so-called Northern motorway.



According to the General Census of Population and Habitat (RGPH), the town had a population of 18,573 in 1998. The population is said to have been about 23,082 in 2005 according to the estimations of the National Institute of Statistics (INS). If this rate of growth continues, then the population will double every 22 years. A breakdown of the population by nationality shows that 66% are from Côte d'Ivoire and 34% foreigners. The Ivorian population is predominantly Akan (79.4%), followed by Mandé (5.8%) and Volta (5.4%). The main religions are Christianity (39.1%) and Islam (30.8%). Animism is practised by 9.2% of the population.

Starting in 2005, trials of the MDGs in the pilot town of Tiassalé were based on a profiling of the context according to the MDGs. This profiling gave rise to a strategic plan that highlighted the local constraints that needed to be overcome and challenges to be met for each of the eight goals.

#### 4.1.2 The MDGs in Tiassalé

The UNDP and the government of Côte d'Ivoire, represented by the Ministry of Planning and Development, oversaw the "Project to Support the National Promotion and Awareness-raising on MDGs" in Tiassalé. Local people were organised by an NGO to enable them to participate in the actions foreseen by the project.

Thus the system of reference was defined for each goal, the challenges identified, the strategies and local priorities determined, practical implementation policies clarified and expectations in terms of development aid established. There was a local strategy paper – but our conversations with the actors involved would suggest that the project could not be carried out in the end for three reasons:

1. *A lack of project coordination between the Ministry of Planning and Development, which was supposed to be leading it, the municipality of Tiassalé and the UNDP*

All decisions regarding the implementation of the project were centralised at the Ministry, where there was the coordinator of the MDG project, who had been recruited and his salary paid by the UNDP. The coordinator's work schedule was planned as if the municipal dimension of the project were not a priority, although the councillors in Tiassalé expected this person to be a conduit between the pilot municipality and the authorities. What is more, they were hoping that the coordinator might assist the municipality in drafting projects to apply for funding to the state and its development partners.

2. *A lack of government willpower to support local communities with their projects*

Apart from a few slogans, the government showed little desire to support this pilot municipality in its efforts to implement the MDGs locally. The energy of the town mayor, who sought bits of funding from the United States Embassy and the UNOCI, soon fizzled out and the local authorities lost their enthusiasm when confronted with the lack of institutional backup for the project. The mobilisation for the project was intended

to be less institutional and more dependent on the councillors' individual capacity to mobilise their personal contacts.

### 3. *Low capacity of local authorities to pilot a large-scale MDG project*

The municipality of Tiassalé has very few staff. It is limited to a technical department, a registry office and a socio-cultural department – all of which have no proven expertise in development forecasting and planning. Internalising the MDGs involved recruiting new staff with skill and experience in forecasting, planning and fundraising within the local council. However, the municipality's own financial resources all but ruled out recruiting this kind of officer.

The experimental project to internalise the MDGs at the level of the municipality did not achieve its objectives. We should remember that the town of Tiassalé was the only town to volunteer to implement this scheme. By doing so, and given the enthusiasm the scheme inspired, the councillors of Tiassalé saw this pilot project as a chance to gain some funding from the development partners. But these promises of funding were not kept, meaning that, beyond the hype, there were no concrete projects that might have inspired other municipalities to follow their example. Incidentally, the enquiries we addressed to the Union des Villes et Communes de Côte d'Ivoire (Uvicoci) revealed that there was little interest in the scheme from other municipalities given the project's limited success in Tiassalé. There was scarcely more success with the MDGs in the non-profit sector.

## 4.2 MDGs and the non-profit sector

Apart from the town of Tiassalé, the only organisation to raise awareness about the MDGs and to attempt to take the initiative in Côte d'Ivoire has been the *Alliance Internationale pour les Objectifs du Millénaire* (AIODM).

### 4.2.1 AIODM

*The Alliance Internationale pour les Objectifs du Millénaire* (AIODM) is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation. It was founded in September 2006 in Geneva with the aim of promoting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

AIODM was founded as a private initiative by Pascale Fressoz and a hard core of supporters from Savoy and Geneva in 2006. The association now has over 200 members in 15 countries. It contributes its willpower, its ideas, its know-how and volunteer time to strengthen the operational involvement of all stakeholders in striving towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

AIODM is an international organisation. It has established several branches including the *Alliance Panafricaine pour les Objectifs du Millénaire* in Dakar, founded in January 2007, AIODM France (April 2008), AIODM Côte d'Ivoire (October 2009) and AIODM Senegal (April 2010). It has also developed a number of focal points in the Congo, Rwanda, Canada, Colombia, etc. AIODM branches are now being established in India, Mali and Belgium.

#### 4.2.2 AIODM Côte d'Ivoire

In order to achieve its objective of strengthening the operational involvement of all parties in efforts to meet the MDGs, AIDOM International put in place several branches including the one in Côte d'Ivoire. In fact the AIODM Côte d'Ivoire branch was inaugurated during "MDG Week" held from 12 to 17 October 2009 under the patronage of President Laurent Gbagbo and in partnership with the various sectoral ministries. This inauguration was an opportunity to present the local president of AIODM Côte d'Ivoire. The aim of these institutional, but predominantly media-based, activities was to raise interest for the MDGs among local people of all social categories, political parties and religions.

The celebrations for this inauguration began with meetings with the traditional chiefs and inhabitants of Moossou and Bassam on 12 October 2009. The idea behind encouraging involvement by traditional authorities was that they could work as effective conduits to popularise the principles of the MDGs. From this perspective, they established a Charter of AIODM Millennium Villages. The implementation of this Charter called not only for the involvement of kings and village chiefs, but also for active participation by town mayors. This level of participation was seen as essential to make the agreements binding and implement the MDGs in extremely operational fashion in Côte d'Ivoire. 30 villages signed this Charter.

While they were at it, the association also inaugurated the "Maison des OMD" (House of the MDGs) in Abidjan<sup>13</sup>. Also in October 2009, after the establishment of eight Sectoral Platforms, one for each group of actors – media, NGOs, mayors, political parties, kings, clerics, women, young people, and handicapped people –, there was a scientific workshop with the presidents of the eight Platforms, followed by a forum with the following title: "**Making the MDGs a focus for the media, local authorities and companies**". The aim of this was to officialise the launch of AIODM and of the Private Sector Platform in partnership with a large number of media companies and other firms. This forum was then followed up with the launch of the AIODM Millennium Village, which included the twinning of the village of Eri Macouguié in Agboville region with Moossou in Grand Bassam region.

The MDGs thus became known in some villages around Côte d'Ivoire through a combination of the country's formal commitment to them, their promotion by several ministers including Sy Savane, then Minister of Information and Communication, Assana Sangaré, then Minister Delegate for Combatting HIV/AIDS, and Angèle Gnonsoa, Minister for the Ecology and the Environment; by kings, mayors, clerics, company directors, civil society organisations, journalists, young people, women and handicapped people (all those involved in the eight Sectoral Platforms), along with opinion leaders.

AIODM Côte d'Ivoire also developed other projects to encourage communities to appropriate the MDGs. One may cite:

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<sup>13</sup> In fact, the association is hosted by Mrs Marie Laure Kindo, President of the *Association Mondiale pour le Bien-Être des Enfants*, in premises intended to accommodate office-less NGOs and to strengthen and even federate them.

- The founding of the African Centre for Resources and Capacity-building on the MDGs;
- The AIODM Observatory on the MDGs, whose aim was to identify good practice that might facilitate the achievement of the MDGs and make the MDGs central to business practice;
- The Humanitarian Leadership Programme to identify and involve major figures of public life and leaders of opinion;
- The Distinction Programme to reward figures who had shown their commitment to supporting the MDGs;
- The Awareness-raising Programme for children to prepare the adults of tomorrow;
- The establishment of a Prize for Journalists committed to raising public awareness of development actions.

AIODM Côte d'Ivoire also sought to set up an electronic newsletter.

There were allusions to the MDGs in March 2010 during the celebrations for International Women's Day. The president of the Civil Society Convention in Côte d'Ivoire made the most of a speech to present the organisation's recommendations to invite the government to implement the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), which would improve the position of women, with greater determination.

All these schemes could give one the impression that there is significant mobilisation around the MDGs. But one should relate the instant craze to a very African culture of receiving political figures officially with all suitable ceremony. But the quality of the welcome is not really synonymous with accepting what is put forward during the meetings. The courtesies and festivities often drown out the essential message, and this was exactly what happened with AIODM's valiant mobilisation efforts. The presence of officials such as ministers always draws large crowds in areas where local people do not often have the chance to welcome such important figures. But this is no guarantee whatsoever of their appropriating the projects that are put to them – and this is true of the AIODM Millennium Village scheme.

It was a foreign civil society organisation that took the initiative to promote the MDGs to the grassroots communities, even though this organisation attempted to establish a local office to help the idea to prosper. Yet ownership of the MDGs remained limited, in spite of the considerable institutional planning put into ensuring that they were widely promoted. There were no concrete actions to back up the media fanfare that accompanied the inauguration and setting-up of the platforms. Grafting the idea of promoting the MDGs into local authorities and non-profit organisations was relatively unsuccessful, but nor were they widely discussed in academic circles.

### 4.3 Academics and the MDGs

Discussion forums might have incubated the issue of the MDGs in Ivorian society if academia had appropriated them. “Scholarly” circles do not seem to have been as alive to the MDGs as they were to human rights issues for instance or the impact of the socio-political crisis on national unity. Only the *Centre Ivoirien de Recherches en Sciences Économiques et Sociales* (CIRES) organised a seminar on “Political Economy in Côte d’Ivoire” in 2006. But the MDGs only featured on the margins of this meeting. Similarly, some social science research centres such as the Swiss Center for Scientific Research (CSRS) encouraged research proposals that took account of the MDGs in their calls for applications for research funding. Yet there are only rare examples of this.

No local academic journal really showed any serious interest in the question. The MDGs were used any old how as a slogan or as a rallying cry by the authorities.

The relative lack of interest in academic circles can be explained by two factors. The first of these is linked to the socio-political crisis. Academics were more focused on analysing the causes and the many twists and turns of the socio-political crisis that has paralysed Côte d’Ivoire for over a decade. University symposiums over the last decade have looked at this subject from many different angles. The second factor is concern about the implementation of economic policies that would enable Côte d’Ivoire to reach completion point, and this has preoccupied the state and, as a result, economists and financiers.



## 5 Critical Analysis of the Implementation of the MDGs in Côte d'Ivoire

The reader will by now have a good idea of the situation. The state tried to appropriate the MDGs by integrating them into its strategy for boosting development and reducing poverty. It became an automatic mechanism for politicians to carry out self-evaluations, even though the participatory methodology for these evaluations, which was meant to be an instrument of political dialogue, had not yet been fully appropriated by all stakeholders. Lastly, the MDGs were built into the PRSP – clearly a good approach, since the Millennium Goals did not clash with those of the PRSP. The only problem with the PRSP was that the attractiveness of gaining debt relief through the HIPC initiative led Côte d'Ivoire to direct its efforts more towards keeping control of budgetary constraints. With partial debt relief, the Bretton Woods institutions have found an alternative strategy to renew the pressure on states to introduce reforms whose logic is still very much in line with neo-liberal orthodoxy, oriented more towards growth than towards social policy and other aspects of development. The special situation in Côte d'Ivoire is further complicated by the additional pressure of the state having to lift the country out of the crisis.

The government repeatedly argued that the scarcity of resources was the main reason for the disparity between the stated objectives and the results actually achieved. According to the state authorities, the resource gap required to achieve the goals was in part due to the development partners' reluctance to pay their financial contributions; the funders generally justified this reluctance by the world economic crisis. Several studies have attempted to demonstrate the negative impact of the global economic crisis on achieving the Millennium Development Goals. This crisis has made donors reluctant to respect their financial commitments. Yet this exogenous factor does not fully explain the poor results regarding the Millennium Goals in Côte d'Ivoire. In plain terms, the funding shortfall alone does not offer sufficient explanation for the poor results. Three endogenous factors should be taken into account when considering the poor performance in Côte d'Ivoire.

### **(i) The effects of successive political crises on policy implementation**

The armed conflict in 2002 and the situation of political instability and security concerns it caused led to an increase in poverty and kept forcing the state to adjust its priorities. This explains the plan to revise the PRSP for the third time in 2012. Yet the PRSP and the Millennium Goals had already been seriously affected by the various sudden changes in the socio-political crisis in Côte d'Ivoire after 2002. The government has to deal with the as yet insufficiently analysed impact of the new political situation following the four-month post-electoral crisis in early 2011 and the resultant spread of poverty. Incidentally, the Ivorian Ministry for Planning and Development decided to organise some regional seminars on poverty reduction in July and August 2011. Their aim was to assess the impact of the recent post-electoral crisis and to draw up priority action plans in order

to bring the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) up to date. Experiences in Côte d'Ivoire again show very clearly the negative impact of political instability in general, and of armed conflict in particular, on development planning.

### **(ii) Choices and decision-making under external pressure**

Like other states, Côte d'Ivoire is dependent on external funding; this is one of its weaknesses and in particular this accounts for the limited choice it has as far as defining its economic policy goes. This fragility means that it is not immune to outside pressure, which explains why many decisions are taken in a rush. The country's rapid alignment with outside demands bound to promises of funding explains it is diplomatic and strategic for the state to sign up for some global schemes. It explains why politicians appropriate some policies formally and superficially. But, in the technical ministerial agencies that have to deal with the many financial pressures<sup>14</sup> to which a state like Côte d'Ivoire is subjected, there is often criticism of development partners, who are paid for their development knowledge, even as the state resigns itself to adopting a docile attitude in its fundraising efforts to get hold of the financial aid it needs. And even if this means drawing a line under the failures of one policy that will be immediately replaced by another with the accompanying funding. This is not the first time that Côte d'Ivoire has shown some political will in its development commitments, which it has then failed to act upon. Such an attitude was already observed around 1995 and after the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development in 2005. The challenges then were just as great, while the state's capacity to excel itself was just as limited (Akindès 2001). Yet when such commitments contain an element of financial commitment in return – as was the case for the PRSP, which in Côte d'Ivoire now included the MDGs – this can be seen as a power game based on the principle of accepting certain development ideas along with their financial component. However, all of this actually obscures the game of confiscation of development knowledge that is really supposed to come from within (country-driven), if procedural manuals for implementing such policies are to be believed, and a number of authors<sup>15</sup> around Zack-Williams and Mohan (Zack-Williams and Mohan 2005).

It is worth telling one anecdote that is a fairly symptomatic illustration of the asymmetric decision-making power between funding agencies and the weak administrations<sup>16</sup> of weak states. As part of the process of coping with the new socio-political circumstances, a joint mission from the World Bank and the IMF in July 2011 initiated an exchange with the Ivorian Ministry for Planning and Development about the need to review the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and to redefine the government's priorities to take account of the new situation resulting from the crisis, as well as the country's immediate needs. However, during this encounter, the officials from the Bretton Woods institutions attempted to influence the progress of public policy initiatives. It was during

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14 For more about the role of guile manifesting as technical concerns in the power relations between financial institutions and the finance ministers of African countries, cf.: Jerven {Institut National de la Statistique (INS), 2002 #3000}(2011), Hibou (2011), Samuel, 2011).

15 Cf. Special edition of the Review of African Political Economy, N° 106, 2005 on the question of neo-liberal development policies.

16 On the structural weaknesses of state administrations in their attempts to take charge of the different aspects of policies to combat poverty, read Canagarajah, S. and A. Van Diesen, 2011), Ikhide, S. and M. Obadan (2011).



these exchanges that the new Minister of Planning and Development was informed that the World Bank had commissioned two studies on Côte d'Ivoire, one on poverty and the other on the growth sectors in the national economy. The first study had supposedly shown the substantial gap between the poverty indicator presented by the former Ivorian authorities and the one revealed in the study commissioned by the World Bank and quoted on this occasion. The government's report had announced a figure of 48%, whereas the World Bank's put it at 43% – a discrepancy of 5% that deserved some explanation, the mission leader stated. This statistical difference also raised the issue of the reliability of the figures on which the poverty reduction strategy, as part of the MDG policies, was based. The issue of variance in figures highlights the strategic importance of how a country presents itself in its development statistics, which are often due to competing or conflicting evaluation methods according to who produces the figures and who receives them. This second point appears even more decisive in an assessment of the Ivorian authorities' capacity to take the initiative and of their real room for manoeuvre.

At the same meeting, the World Bank experts notified the Minister of Planning – who urgently needed to define a poverty reduction policy – that he should concentrate instead on the study on the growth sectors in the economy. They handed over a copy of the preliminary report on the study commissioned by their institution to the Minister for him to analyse, comment on and criticise. In the absence of any critical mass, there is a strong chance that this report will now be the source book and road map for the ministry's actions.

To put it plainly, “macroeconomic frameworks” have changed name. They are now called PRSPs. The socio-political analysis of these PRSPs reveals the barely concealed power relations between the Bretton Woods institutions and individual states. This power balance is structurally in favour of the former in the macroeconomic context of African economies living on a just-in-time basis financially. PRSPs' participatory packaging gives a false impression of a positive methodology that guarantees collective decision-making. But it would be worthwhile carrying out an ethnographic study of how a PRSP is produced. It would become clear that it is a job done by experts according to a very formal methodology, and that due to its scheduling and various pressures, there is in fact little or no time for any truly participatory choices or decision-making. The production of a PRSP as an exercise can hardly disguise the normative language that is just as restrictive in terms of budgetary terms as were the “conditionalities” that accompanied the adjustment plans. PRSPs therefore leave little room for any in-depth consideration of a truly forward-thinking, sustainable and socially minded development policy of the kind that the MDGs intend to promote. All of this raises questions about the congruence between the suggested macroeconomic policy framework and the poverty reduction strategy that is currently under discussion (Chowdhury and Islam 2011).

### **(iii) Little commitment from civil society organisations in Côte d'Ivoire**

Poverty reduction strategies and policies referring to the MDGs call for strong involvement by civil society. They are therefore meant to be participatory. However, the participatory dimension has been relatively weak in the implementation of these policies. There has been a boom in the number of NGOs in Côte d'Ivoire over the last

15 years. These NGOs jostle for position and present themselves as the sole and best representatives of what is known as civil society. Yet most of them have been responding to a logic of making the most of opportunities offered by the development partners' need to fund humanitarian projects. This has given rise to "an entire generation of civil society organisations that are almost exclusively focussed on emergencies and whose sole modus operandi is to provide services in an asymmetric, sub-contractual relationship with international NGOs" (Floridi and Verdaecchia 2010). Civil society organisations are thus missing from the dialogue about development policies and strategies. A study commissioned by the European Union Delegation in Côte d'Ivoire gives a good description of the situation in the following terms:

Although it can be said that the representation of civil society organisations – and in particular NGOs – in consultation frameworks is now an established fact, the same is not always true of their actual contribution to the major decisions taken in the various forums. In fact, it is the invitations to NGOs – only selecting a few civil society organisations according to relatively non-transparent criteria – to participate in the various bodies and their lack of the necessary skills to discuss the issues at stake in an effective manner that were often responsible for the NGOs' poor contribution to these bodies. (Floridi and Verdaecchia 2010: p. 12)

The promotion of political dialogue on development strategies is a recent phenomenon. It dates back to the first generation of poverty reduction policies. It would seem that neither the state nor civil society – let alone development partners – have really developed an instinct for and a culture of dialogue and participation. The culture of over 40 years of interventionist and centralised development policy lives on.

## 6 Conclusion

As has been the case with other initiatives, Côte d'Ivoire committed itself to achieving the MDGs by 2015. By doing so the Ivorian state made an official statement of political will by integrating the MDGs into the PRSP. The drafting of this paper was a reaction to two constraints: the need (i) to finally equip the country with a development strategy after a number of destabilising structural adjustment programmes; and the necessity (ii) to respect the conditionality on which the production of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper is predicated in order to have a hope of receiving money from the international funding coffers. This exercise was possible because, as they saw it, there was no fundamental conflict between the MDGs and the structural social and economic challenges facing Ivorian society. The only thing was that, five years from the 2015 deadline, the Ivorian state's performance in pursuing and achieving the eight major objectives fell far below expectations. The Ivorian state therefore had little chance to prove its ability to meet the underlying challenges of these goals – all the more so since its resilience has been sapped, not only by the structural inability of the state administration to plan and execute medium- and long-term multi-sector development programmes but also by outside pressure. The situation of socio-political crisis in which Côte d'Ivoire is mired is a major factor limiting the state's performance with regard to the goals it has set itself. Yet it cannot justify everything.

The socio-political crisis certainly exacerbated the public administration's poor implementation of the major MDG projects. But there was no great enthusiasm for meeting the challenge of these social commitments in the rest of society either. There could have been greater awareness-raising among civil society so that the wider public might appropriate matters for themselves, and public awareness of the issues at stake would have helped to scale up the number of initiatives to either force the state to increase its efforts or to fill in for the state wherever it was failing. On closer analysis, however, it becomes clear that Ivorian civil society, or society in general, has not developed any real attachment to the MDGs, which only the state appears to have internalised. One would be inclined to think that the MDG scheme would have caught on at local authority level. However, the enthusiasm of a town such as Tiassalé to be part of the experiment turned out to be more of a strategy to capture outside financial resources. Since the promises of external funding were rarely kept in Tiassalé's case, the idea did not flourish among other municipalities in Côte d'Ivoire. The lack of debate on this issue, the poor implementation of the MDGs and its equally poor ownership by civil society organisations shows that the "graft" of the MDGs has not really taken, other than in government circles.

One might also advance the argument that Côte d'Ivoire – in the same way it did with the commitments made at the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development – was only reacting to pressure from its development partners, among others, when it took the MDGs on board, but it converted this reaction into a fundraising opportunity that was then subtly addressed to those self-same funding partners. This is what one is inclined to think when one reads the reports and spots the frequency with which a link is made between the challenges to be met if they wish to achieve the MDGs and

requests for foreign aid, often in the form of priority cooperation projects. The government appears to have made precious few financial commitments of its own – or at any rate they are barely perceptible.

Beyond any discussion of the aspirations, unrealistic or otherwise, of the Millennium Development Goals, (Saith 2006; Easterly 2009; Vandemoortele 2009; Chibba 2011), the fundamental problem that this study of the Ivorian situation reveals is one of African states' critical ownership<sup>17</sup> of all the techniques put forward by the international financial institutions and even the United Nations System. The study's results raise questions about the capacity of states, in a yet-to-be-determined synergy with non-governmental actors to implement in coherent fashion a multitude of actions designed to qualitatively improve living standards, making adjustments as necessary and evaluating them endogenously. Seen from this perspective, Côte d'Ivoire shows none of the signs of decision-making power of countries such as India, Brazil, China or other Southeast Asian countries (Stiglitz and Shahid 2001; Cook 2006). It seems just as unrealistic to hope that United Nations agencies might replace the state in this exercise. Here we see the whole question of the recurring problem of the governance of multi-sectoral public policy. But the subtle relationship between the power of the financial institutions and the state that needs challenging if we are to understand the difficulties of defining endogenously realistic poverty reduction and/or wealth creation policies. Despite the overt good intentions of the MDGs, North-South relations cannot break free of the neo-liberal ideology that is prescribed to weak states such as Côte d'Ivoire dressed up in more showy, humanist rags<sup>18</sup>.

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17 For a critical analysis of the concept of ownership, cf. Raffinot, M. (1995) and (2010).

18 Cf. a critical analysis of this topic by Saith (2006).

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## Working Paper Series, SRP 4 “MDGs”

**The present study is part of the Working Paper Series for the Special Research Project on “Poverty-oriented development policy beyond the Millennium Development Goals”.**

With 2015 fast approaching, a sense of disenchantment is growing in some circles as many working towards the high-profile Millennium Development Goals realise how far out of reach they remain. Disillusionment is already giving way to critical reflection, however, and the contours of a new critical discourse on global poverty and development are beginning to emerge. Many have begun questioning implicit norms and assumptions that underpin the MDGs. Critics see the first goal in particular – “to reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day” – as subtly re-enforcing a mainstream view of poverty couched in ideals of global capitalism and market growth.

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The present Working Paper by Francis Akindès provides the working group with an overview of related debates at global level. Responsibility for its content rests with the author.

Zurich / Bern, August 2012, Urs Geiser and Didier Péclard, Project Coordinators

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In 2000 the Ivorian government committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). But prior to engaging in this process, in 1997 the government had already determined strategic areas for combating poverty according to the approach and process needed for preparing its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). This was done within the perspective of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. Already within the framework of the HIPC initiative, the possibility of a partial debt relief hoped for by the state entailed a certain ownership of the budgetary constraints suggested by economic reforms. Another constraint – this time political but with economic and financial implications – was added in 2002 with the severe socio-political crisis that took place between 2002 and 2011. According to successive reports elaborated by the Ivorian government in partnership with the UN, the results achieved in the fight against poverty are not conclusive after approximately ten years of experience with poverty reduction strategies and economic reforms referred to as “pro-poor”.

The objective of this report is to show (i) how the armed conflict weakened the state’s capacity to finance its commitments, and (ii) how the logic of the government’s action in favour of poverty reduction was, in large part, inspired more by the prospect of eligibility for the HIPC initiative based on economic reforms than by its commitment to the MDGs. Finally, the present publication shows (iii) how the framing of economic reforms in view of the HIPC initiative reduces the power of the state to initiate truly endogenous poverty reduction strategies.

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*dialogue*