Comoros energy storage for resilience

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The Green Climate Fund is contributing U.S. $ 41.9 million towards a project in the Comoros Islands which is designed to increase the climate resilience of water supply for drinking water and irrigation purposes in the areas most exposed to climate risks. The project is being co-funded by UNDP (with a contribution of U.S. $ 2 million), the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (with a contribution of U.S. $ 293,000) China-CGC (with a contribution of U.S. $ 1.9 million, and the Government of the Union of Comoros (with a contribution of U.S. $ 14.5 million)

The Union of the Comoros is a country made up of a total of four larger islands in Southeastern Africa, located in the Mozambique channel of the Indian Ocean between Malawi and Madagascar. The larger islands are Mayotte (with an area of 370km?), Anjouan (424 km?), Moh?li (290 km?) and Grand-Comore (1148 km?). Although the Comoros are a sovereign nation, the island of Mayotte is formally French territory.

As a result of the topography of the country, its watersheds and aquifers are small and have little natural water storage capacity, which limits the resilience of water supply infrastructure to climate change, an issue which is further compounded by increasing variability of rainfall. The average annual rainfall for the islands is 1000 mm, but this is highly variable from year to year. United Nations models indicate a potential reduction in dry-season rainfall of up to 47 percent by 2090 in Comoros, increased rains in the wet season, and more severe cyclone activity.

As a result of these challenges, the Government of Comoros is working in partnership with the Green Climate Fund and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has launched a project to ensure climate-resilient water supplies for 450,000 people.

The project includes work on the "enabling environment", which in this case referred primarily to an update of the country"s water legislation to introduce a dynamic form of Integrated Water Resources Management with a focus on adaptation to climate change, combined with awareness raising and the introduction of systematic measures to assess and respond to climate risks. To support this, a complete mapping of watersheds and their hydrographic networks has been conducted and the water resources monitoring network has been updated and improved.

"Children will have water to drink, farmers can grow successful crops and feed their families, and we can adapt our economy and our society to the catastrophic risks brought on by climate change" says Minister Abdou on GCF board approval for groundbreaking UNDP-supported project

19 October 2018, Comoros - In small island developing state like Comoros, water is life. With a new US$41.9 million grant from the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Government of Comoros in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and a broad coalition of other international actors, is stepping up

efforts to ensure climate-resilient water supplies for 450,000 people, a bold step in defining a sustainable pathway to low-carbon climate-resilient development for a nation where 80 percent of the rural population still lives in poverty.

Climate change impacts threaten to derail recent development gains in Comoros - where approximately 80 percent of the rural population is reliant on rain-fed agriculture. United Nations models indicate a potential reduction in dry-season rainfall of up to 47 percent by 2090 in Comoros, increased rains in the wet season, and more severe cyclone activity.

Access to surface water on three of the small islands of the Comoros is a challenge. The main island of Grande Comore has no surface water, requiring coastal towns to exploit marginally fresh groundwater resources. The rural upland communities, making up 50 percent of the island"s population, rely solely on rainwater harvesting. On the two more remote and poorer islands of Anjouan and Moheli, there are no proven groundwater resources and the people there are completely reliant on seasonally variable streams.

"With limited water storage capacity, we need to take immediate action to improve our ability to collect and store water and ensure the sustainable management of this essential natural resource over the long haul," said the General Directorate of Environment and Forestry, Mr Elamine Youssouf Mbechezi.

The project aligns with Comoros" Accelerated Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy and the government"s vision to reduce poverty and expand access to reliable and safe drinking water and sanitation, especially for the most vulnerable people like smallholder farmers that rely on rainfed agriculture to feed their families.

"The eight-year project will achieve a national paradigm shift in water resources management, allowing us to make good on our commitments to increase water supply to 100 percent of our citizens by 2030 and provide all of our farmers with access to irrigation water," said Comoros Minister Moustadroine Abdou.