

**UNION OF
COMOROS**

DHAPP

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HIV/AIDS
PREVENTION PROGRAM

REDUCING THE INCIDENCE OF HIV/AIDS
AMONG UNIFORMED PERSONNEL IN
SELECTED AFRICAN NATIONS AND
BEYOND

WINNING BATTLES IN THE WAR AGAINST HIV/AIDS

BACKGROUND

Country Statistics

The Union of the Comoros lies in the Indian Ocean archipelago and is composed of Grande Comore, Moheli, Mayette, and Anjouan islands. The estimated population of the Comoros is 732,000 people, with an average life expectancy of 63 years. French and Arabic are the official languages of the Comoros, which has an estimated literacy rate of 57%, unevenly distributed between men and women. The Comoros obtained independence from France in 1975. Since then, more than 20 coups and secession attempts have occurred. In 1999, the Comoros Army took control of the government and negotiated a constitution in 2001 known as the Fomboni Accords. An objective of this new government order was to end the political instability and almost constant violence that had earned it the title of “the coup-coup islands.” This constitution provided each island with a semiautonomous government, a president, and its own parliament. The Comoros also has a rotating national presidency for the overarching Union government. In spite of this, military action was needed on March 2008 to regain control of the Anjouan Island. In a military operation, African Union coalition forces from Tanzania, Sudan, and Senegal, with logistical support from Libya, supported the Comoros government’s military in regaining control. The GDP per capita is \$1,100.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The current HIV prevalence rate in the Comoros’ general population is <0.1, with fewer than 200 people living with HIV/AIDS.



Military Statistics

The Comoros National Development Army (CNDA) is composed of approximately 700 members of the Defense Force and 500 Federal Police. The Union of Comoros maintains a defense treaty with France, which provides training of Comorian military personnel, naval resources for protection of territorial waters, and air surveillance. HIV prevalence in the military is unknown. The Comoros allocates 2.8% of the GDP for military purposes.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

In-Country Ongoing Assistance

DHAPP staff has been collaborating with the DAO at the US Embassy in Moroni and the CNDA on an HIV/AIDS program.

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

DHAPP is standing by to provide assistance to the CNDA. DHAPP approved FY08 funds for providing CT services to include counselor training and procuring test kits. Funds will also be used for producing and distributing HIV prevention materials. Funds were not fully expended in FY08. It is expected that activities will continue in FY09.

