



ENERGY ACCESS AS A MAJOR CHALLENGE FOR SMALL ISLAND STATES

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Energy access is indispensable to economic transformation in most developing countries, mainly the small developing island states such as Comoros. However, this approach to development is threatened by a chronic energy crisis in some countries and is compromising all efforts in other sectors: agriculture and fisheries, industry and crafts, tourism and also services (banks and commerce, among others). In fact, due to a small market, small island states do not enjoy affordable prices in the energy market.

CONSTRAINTS TO ENERGY ACCESS: Small island states are isolated to energy markets, have limited resources and are facing environmental vulnerability and dependence on imported sources of energy. In addition, the very limited scale of an island is a handicap when importing a low quantity of oil and gas and then to produce electricity using diesel and small power plants at reasonable costs. This handicap is compounded by the volatility of the price of oil, which small island states are heavily dependent on for energy needs. The economy of such states cannot stand under such pressure.

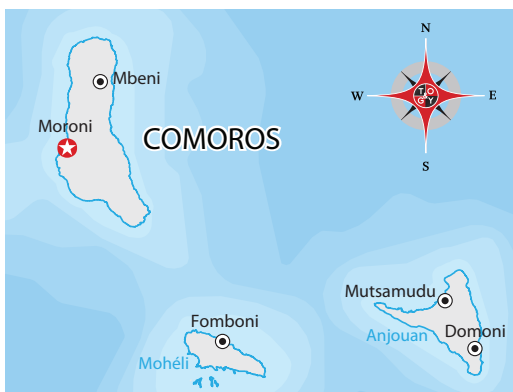
LIMITED NATURAL RESOURCES: In large countries, in the Eastern Africa subregion, more than 90 percent of the population are reliant on biomass, while in Asian countries 54 percent, Latin American countries 19 percent and the Middle East 0 percent (according to an Economic Commission for Africa report in 2014, *Energy Access and Security in Eastern Africa*). In most small island states, biomass is limited and cannot be available as an alternative to oil and gas. Biomass represents more than 60 percent of energy consumption in Comoros. However, due to the pressure this situation exerted on natural resources

in term of deforestation, the use of biomass is detrimental to the environment and ecosystems preservation.

OPPORTUNITIES WITH RENEWABLE ENERGY: Fortunately, the foundations and principles that the green economy offers to small island states are specific mechanisms to deal with energy challenges and sustainable development. The development of renewable energy represents not a choice but the only choice left to small island states when addressing energy challenges.

GEOTHERMAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE COMOROS: In the case of the Comoros islands and other islands such as Dominica and Iceland, among others, the volcano on which the archipelago is based offers opportunities in terms of energy through the heat it contains. Development of geothermal energy in Comoros is aiming for economic, social and ecological (sustainable) development. And more specifically, it aims to increase the share of clean energy in the energy mix, by replacing fossil fuels – the share of clean energy in the Comorian energy system is at a very low level, less than 3 percent. It also aims to ensure energy security and the mastery of energy dependence. This initiative is not an easy business, but the government of the Union of the Comoros has made a strong commitment to energy-sector development. The support of our partners, the government of New Zealand and UN Development Programme, urges us in this way. An approach of the African Union is committed under the Geothermal Risk Mitigation Fund to achieve a first study of the surface phase. We invite all partners to support renewable energy projects, which remain the most credible perspective to overcome difficulties in energy for most small island states. ■

COMOROS AT A GLANCE



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- **Capital:** Moroni
- **Nationality:** Comoran
- **Ethnic groups:** Antalote, Cafre, Makoa, Oimatsaha, Sakalava
- **Languages:** Arabic (official), French (official), Shikomoro (a blend of Swahili and Arabic)
- **Population:** 766,865 (2014 est.)
- **GDP (purchasing power parity):** \$911 million (2013 est.)
\$879.9 million (2012 est.)
\$855.1 million (2011 est.)
- **GDP per capita:** \$1,300 (2013 est.)
- **GDP composition by sector of origin (2012 est.):** agriculture: 51 percent
industry: 10 percent
services: 39 percent
- **Agriculture:** vanilla, cloves, ylang-ylang (perfume essence), copra, coconuts, bananas, cassava
- **Industries:** fishing, tourism, perfume distillation
- **Labour force:** 233,500 (2011 est.)

Source: CIA World Factbook