

# PRESS RELEASE



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## UNDP steps up its support for sound public finance in Africa

*Regional programme on taxes and budgets introduces online learning*

**Dakar, Senegal, 14 March** – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will train a diverse range of partners during the second phase of a comprehensive programme designed to mobilize tax revenues and improve budget management in Africa.

The programme currently supports 17 countries in West and Central Africa and it will expand its portfolio to include a large number of civil society representatives, parliamentarians, universities and government departments involved in service delivery. Part of this effort will be conducted through online training.

The programme, managed by the Division for Development strategies and Public Finance, known in French as Le Pôle, aims to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and is expected to be essential to the implementation of Africa's post- 2015 the development agenda.

"Effective development interventions are inseparable from the transparent and inclusive management of public finances," said Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, the Director of UNDP's Regional Bureau for Africa.

"Mobilizing and managing resources appropriately is the responsibility of a large number of actors, including but not limited to ministries," he said. "We must support civil society, municipalities and supervisory bodies in the implementation and execution of solid budgets."

Held today, the meeting of the Steering Committee of the programme will mark the official launch of the second phase, covering the period 2014-2017, and discuss the integration of national development strategies in national and local budgets.

The meeting brings together the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the European Union, the German development agency GIZ, as well as the Governments of France, Spain and Luxembourg.

Over that period, added focus will be given to countries in conflict or post-conflict situations, such as the Central African Republic and Mali. The programme will also look at how to incorporate gender issues, the creation of jobs and climate change considerations into national and local budgets.

With UNDP's support, nine countries developed national development strategies in the first phase of the scheme. Specific sectors such as education and health became better equipped for monitoring and evaluating performance and delivery.

In Togo, for instance, policies on agriculture, water and the environment adopted "programme budgets" detailing costs, estimated results and performance targets for each activity.

UNDP's assistance also helped to democratize the management of public finances, by training national institutions to oversee budgets, while involving civil society in their preparation.

For example, members of parliament in Chad and Côte d'Ivoire received training on public finance reforms and are now able to discuss budgets on an equal footing with the government.

"The aim is not only to train the decision-makers of today, but to support countries over time, in a more structured and formal cooperation effort," said Laurence Jacquet, the Coordinator of the Pôle. "In that perspective, capacity building of stakeholders is a central component of our activities. We will increasingly work with training centres and universities to enhance the knowledge of our future leaders."

Through the programme, the University Cheikh Anta Diop of Dakar now offers a Masters degree in fiscal auditing.

In addition, UNDP will partner with training centers to roll out a comprehensive online curriculum on taxes, budgets and public finance.

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**About UNDP:** Since 1966 UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in more than 170 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.

**About the Division for Development strategies and Public Finance (Le Pôle):** Based in Dakar, the programme is a joint initiative between France and UNDP and it provides technical expertise to partners such as national administrations, parliaments and civil society organizations. It supports the efforts of Central and West African states to better integrate their national development strategies into local and national budgets, within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

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