

*Cape Verde*  
An Emerging Nation



On the  
road to  
the  
MDGs





## *Cape Verde*

## *Vulnerabilities*

- Poor in natural resources and with only 10% of arable land, Cape Verde remains vulnerable. Within the 4,000 square kilometers that make up its 10 islands, Cape Verde hosts a scattered population of around 500,000, on all islands but one. Island countries suffer particular vulnerability, especially with regard to the environment and opportunities to develop.
- Even though Cape Verde's poverty rates have fallen substantially, a quarter of the population still lives in poverty. The economy was impacted by the global economic crisis, but Cape Verde nevertheless registered a 1.8% real GDP growth rate in 2009. Gender and rural/urban inequality is a concern, as is youth and child vulnerability. Other key challenges lie in the areas of education, access to health care, security, the environment and climate change.
- Despite these challenges, Cape Verde remains on track to meet most of the MDG's, particularly those related to poverty eradication, health, education and gender.



# GOAL 1

## ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

### Status at a glance

Poverty rate: 26,6%

Prevalence of underweight children under-five years of age: 10%

Cape Verde expects to meet all targets related to poverty eradication and hunger, and has all already nearly halved the proportion of people living in extreme poverty, as well as the proportion of people living below the minimum level of dietary consumption. In Cape Verde, the portion of the population living in poverty fell from 49% in 1989 to 37% in 2002 and 26,6% in 2007. Between 1990 and 2007, the Human Development Index (HDI) rose by 1.08% annually, from 0.589 to 0.708, equivalent to a world ranking of 121 out of 182. Nevertheless, poverty remains higher in rural than in urban areas and affects women in particular, with unemployment the main cause. Poverty reduction through growth is one of Cape Verde's greatest challenges. Its "double insularity" – the country itself is far from its African neighbors, and individual islands are far from each other – creates unique constraints, especially in regard to the cost of basic economic inputs, transportation and communications. Because the country is developing and implementing its second generation

Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy paper (GPRSP II - 2008-2011), Cape Verde has managed to successfully overcome many of the structural challenges of this insularity. It has done so through good governance, proper management of internal and external resources, and strong global partnerships with North and South alike.

The UN's own partnership with Cape Verde – through advocacy for the rights of the most vulnerable; historic school feeding programs (recently taken over by the government, with evident advances); support to small-scale farmers and entrepreneurs and to a vibrant, job-creating private sector; strengthening governance, education and human capacity; promotion of gender equality; protection of the environment; and support for improved national health systems – have all been designed and implemented with the consistent vision of partnering with the government and people of Cape Verde to improve lives and meet the over-arching goal of eradicating poverty.



## GOAL 2

### ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

#### Status at a glance

Net enrolment ratio in primary education: 92%

Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds, women and men: 96%

Cape Verde's 2008 and 2010 MDG reports indicated that the country is rapidly approaching the goal of achieving universal primary education, and has already achieved the MDG 2 on many islands and in many municipalities. Moreover, the government is committed to expanding compulsory basic education through the eighth grade. UN partnership, particularly through a 31-year national school feeding program that the government of Cape Verde has just taken over in August, 2010, has been a key factor in allowing Cape Verdean families to send their children to primary school (the school feeding program directly contributed to poverty eradication and child survival goals, as well). Not satisfied with "nearly achieving" its primary education goal, Cape Verde is making a final push to identify those

regions and vulnerable groups where targets have not been met.

Through UN support of the 2010 census, such "poverty mapping" will be made easier, and the government and its partners will be able to refocus their assistance. Meanwhile, the government has continued its overall push to strengthen education at all levels in Cape Verde. Within the context of a capacity building effort aimed at lessening dependency on external resources, particular attention has been paid to increasing vocational training, which will be tailored to market demands. The expansion of university education will permit many more Cape Verdean high school graduates to continue their education in-country.



## GOAL 3

### PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

#### Status at a glance

Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education: 0,93

Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament: 18,1%

Cape Verde expects to meet its MDG targets on the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. Cape Verde's 2010 MDG report indicated that Cape Verde has achieved gender parity in primary and secondary education, and in some cases (middle and secondary schools), attendance rates of girls is higher than that of boys – a statistic of some concern to education authorities due to higher drop-out rates among boys. Statistics related to increased women's participation in parliament and other political institutions at both national and local levels are also encouraging. However, gender-related statistics regarding economic activity and unemployment, while trending in the right direction, still indicate that economic activity among men remains higher than that for women, and that

unemployment among women remains higher than that of men.

Gender is a cross-cutting theme of both the national Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy and of the One UN Programme in Cape Verde. This allows for interventions in partnership with a range of stakeholders in Cape Verde to meet five major gender-related challenges: education, vocational training, employment and economic activity, political participation of women and decision making, and gender-based violence. On the latter issue, in response to initiatives from local NGO's and with support from the UN and other partners, the National Assembly just passed in July, 2010, landmark legislation designed to combat gender-based violence.



## GOAL 4

### REDUCING CHILD MORTALITY

#### Status at a glance

Under-five mortality rate: 25,7/1000 live birth (2007)

Infant mortality rate: 21,7/1000 live birth (2007)

Proportion of 1 year-old children immunized against measles: 94,4%

From a high rate of 57 deaths per 1000 in 1995 until the present rate of 21/1000, Cape Verde has nearly met the MDG target of reducing infant mortality, and Cape Verde is on track to meet the targets for reducing child mortality. Cape Verde's strategy to achieve this goal has been multifaceted. An increased national push to identify and vaccinate children in more isolated regions of Cape Verde (with support from the UN) resulted in vaccination rates increasing in one year from 73 % in 2008 to 94,4% in 2009. Greater use of awareness raising campaigns sensitized families to issues related to child health, and the government moved aggressively to bring primary health services closer to the affected populations, so that now 76% of Cape Verdean families live within 30 minutes of a health center.

There is a strong partnership between the Cape Verdean government and the UN in the efforts to reduce child mortality. The government seeks to expand health services to rural populations, who continue to be under-served in comparison with urban communities (92% of urban neighborhoods lie within 30 minutes of health clinics versus 77 percent of rural communities). As achieving MDG 4 is explicitly linked to meeting MDG 5 of improving maternal health, the UN will continue to support government-led efforts to strengthen the overall quality of reproductive health services in Cape Verde.



## GOAL 5

### STRENGTHENING MATERNAL HEALTH

#### Status at a glance

Maternal mortality ratio: 15.8/100,000 live birth

Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel: 77.8%

Having already doubled the percentage of births attended by a skilled health professionals, Cape Verde has seen its maternal mortality rate plummet, and it is solidly on course to meet the maternal health MDG. However, Cape Verde remains especially vigilant in tracking even small fluctuations in maternal mortalities, as occurred in 2009. Health authorities are focusing on improving overall health and nutrition for pregnant women, and on paying more attention to secondary illnesses such as hepatitis, malaria or dengue fever, which can complicate pregnancies. Future focus will continue to be paid to expanding quality reproductive health services and information, in particular to groups facing a greater probability of high-risk pregnancies, such as adolescents.

The UN has been a historical partner with all levels of government in Cape Verde in order to improve overall maternal and reproductive health. The UN will continue to support government-led efforts and to partner with other stakeholders, including NGO's, to better target adolescents and youth and to promote improved reproductive health services and counseling for all.



## GOAL 6

### COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

#### Status at a glance

HIV prevalence among population aged 15-24 years: 0.4%

Condom use at last high-risk sex: 46% (Women), 72% (Men)

Proportion of population with advanced HIV infection with access to antiretroviral drugs: 24%

Cape Verde's priority in the fight against HIV/AIDS has been to maintain pre-existing low rates of HIV prevalence, through expanding access to quality reproductive health service, with special attention on adolescents and youth and through awareness raising among care givers, health professionals, women and young people. Access to prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV has been extended to 90 % national coverage, and special focus has been given to drug addiction issues, of growing concern in Cape Verde. Cape Verde has welcomed the opportunity for global partnership to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS through the support of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and it is hoping to expand this cooperation in the fight against malaria.

Like HIV/AIDS, malaria transmission rates are also low, and Cape Verde has set the ambitious national goal of eradicating the disease.

Cape Verde witnessed in 2009-2010 a good illustration of a global partnership to support government-led efforts to combat the country's first-ever dengue fever epidemic. The UN obtained funding from the Central Emergency Response Fund and, working with the government, mobilized support from Australia, the EU, Luxembourg and the US. The UN promoted South-South cooperation from Brazil, Senegal and Thailand to provide technical skills to local cadres in quick detection and effective monitoring, as well as support to national laboratories.





## GOAL 7

### ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL STABILITY

#### Status at a glance

Proportion of terrestrial areas protected: 15%

Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source: 90% (99% in urban areas and 76% in rural areas)

Per capita green house gas emissions: 873 kgs

Preservation of the environment is fundamental to Cape Verde's sustainable development. The country is home to a number of rare species, and its fragile ecosystems are increasingly subject to pressures due to climate change and endemic problems such as drought and desertification. Access to water is a critical issue in Cape Verde, and meeting the MDG target of increasing access to potable water remains a priority. Although it has low per capita emissions of greenhouse gases, and is dependent on imported fossil fuels for energy production, Cape Verde is determined to both grow economically while limiting its growth in per capita greenhouse gas emissions.

To that end, Cape Verde is building partnerships with the UN and with key donors such as Portugal, Spain and others to expand its use of renewable forms of energy, especially wind and solar technologies. Cape Verde includes in this vision a strong element of South-South Cooperation, and will host the

ECOWAS Regional Training Center for Renewable Energy. The One UN Programme in Cape Verde has provided capacity development to help ensure that national institutions apply strategic legal frameworks to allow for proper management of the environment, and it has helped develop a national plan for natural disaster risk reduction. The UN has worked with local populations to help them protect and manage natural resources, both as a national heritage but also as a source of economic development. With UN support, Cape Verde has maximized its use of Global Environment Facility grants, and it hopes to strengthen participation in global partnerships available to Small Island Developing States.



## GOAL 8

### DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

#### Status at a glance

Unemployment rate for youth between 15 and 24 years old: 25%

Cellular subscribers per 100 population: 54.7

Internet users per 100 population: 14

Cape Verdeans have embraced new information and communications technology, as the widespread use of cellular telephones demonstrates. With its “Novo Mundo” initiative, Cape Verde has set for itself the ambitious goal of providing internet connectivity in all its primary and secondary schools and laptop computers to all its students by 2015. The UN has been a vital partner with Cape Verde in introducing new e-governance structures that allow Cape Verde to offer its citizens more “customer friendly” access to government services. Despite genuine progress in creating jobs in Cape Verde, fighting unemployment, especially youth employment, remains a top priority for the Government and its development partners. The government will expand greatly vocational training programmes and continue to strengthen the overall business and investment climate.

Despite its important economic vulnerabilities, in 2008 Cape Verde became the second country in the world to have graduated from the UN Least Developed Country category. Having acceded to the WTO in 2008 as well, the country has

forged strong partnerships with bilateral, multilateral and global partners, and it has established a Special Partnership with the European Union. Recognized as a committed development counterpart, Cape Verde has managed to maintain steady levels of incoming ODA, while access to concessional loans has been greatly expanded. The European Union contributes nearly all of its assistance in the form of general budget support, and many individual partners, including Spain, Portugal and Luxembourg, are also increasing the component of ODA allocated for budget support. Through its “Delivering as One” initiative, the UN has aligned itself with government planning priorities. The Millennium Challenge Account (USA) has emphasized modernization of Cape Verde’s infrastructure, while France has partnered with Cape Verde on the vital issue of decentralization. Cape Verde, an active partner in ECOWAS and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, has strengthened its South-South cooperation links with such partners as Brazil, China and Cuba; moreover, it also offering cooperation partnerships with São Tomé and Equatorial Guinea.

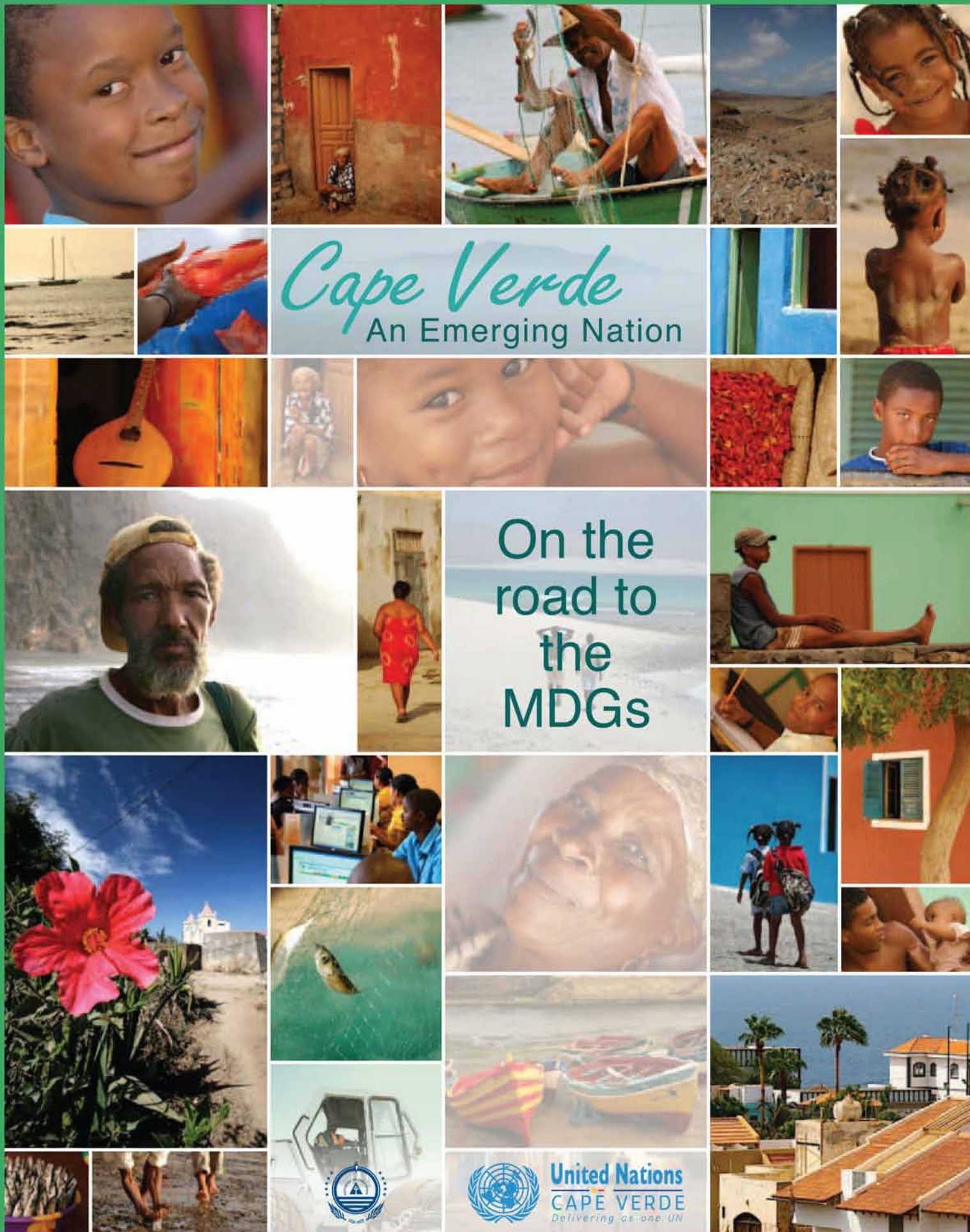


## *Cape Verde*

## *Vision*

- A country that is open to the world, with a strong and dynamic productive system, based on the development of human resources, technological capacity and national culture
- A society of solidarity that enjoys peace and social justice, that is democratic, open and tolerant
- A country endowed with sustainable human development, with balanced regional development and commitment to environmental preservation and ecological awareness

Prime Minister of Cape Verde  
and Head of the Government



*Cape Verde*  
An Emerging Nation

On the road to the MDGs

Credits

Coordination: Anita Pinto/John Davison  
 Production: UN Cape Verde  
 Design/Printing: OPAL Publicidade de Cabo Verde, Lda.  
 Cover by: Julie Pudlowski

Photography by:  
 UN/Julie Pudlowski: MDC2, MDC6, MDC7, Outside Cover  
 UN/Masakazu Shibata: MDC1, MDC3, MDC8, Outside and Inside Cover  
 UN/Anita Pinto: MDC4, MDC5

©2010 UN Cape Verde

