



Integrated Country Strategy

MADAGASCAR AND THE UNION OF THE COMOROS

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Situated on the strategic Mozambique Strait and richly endowed with vast natural resources, unique biodiversity, and expanding youthful populations predisposed to American values, Madagascar and the Comoros offer promising opportunities for stronger partnership at local, regional, and global levels on pressing U.S. challenges and national interests. These are: inclusive and sustainable development; addressing climate change and environmental degradation; promoting mutually beneficial trade and investment; combatting transnational crime; strengthening democracy and respect for human rights; and forging strong alliances to thwart anti-democratic and other malign influences emanating from within or outside both countries.

The political and economic development of Madagascar and the Comoros, and the depth and breadth of our mutual cooperation, have been held back by cycles of political instability, weak governance and corruption, and crippling levels of poverty and inequality. Madagascar is the only non-conflict country to have become poorer since independence. GDP per capita in 2020 was below the 1980 level, and the country ranked 164 out of 189 countries on the 2019 Human Development Index (HDI). Madagascar's democratic and peaceful transfer of power from a ruling to opposition party in 2019 continues to be a ray of hope, but one dimmed by delays and backsliding in planned governance reforms and implementation of an ambitious development agenda. Similarly, the Comoros has a history of inter-island rivalries and frequent coups which has hamstrung progress toward more representative governance and inclusive growth. Though higher than Madagascar, Comoros' GDP per capita is 10 percent of the world's average; it ranks 156 on the HDI. The COVID-19 pandemic has added unexpected and significant economic and governance challenges in both countries, but it still does not mask the continuing need for improved political will, governance, and accountability.

Guided by the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, the Mission will reinvigorate its partnerships with Madagascar and Comoros, working to strengthen democratic processes that encourage equitable participation, improve stability and security, and lead both nations to

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become more reliable partners in addressing mutual concerns. Post will work with civil society, governments, and the media to support free and fair elections in both countries, promote protection of and respect for human rights, and strengthen processes and capacity to improve transparency and government responsiveness to citizens. Their strategic locations in the West Indian Ocean, coupled with weak governance and rule of law, leave Madagascar and the Comoros vulnerable to becoming safe havens for transnational crime, including drugs, human and wildlife trafficking, and terrorism. Through interagency efforts, the Mission will enhance rule of law by building the capacity and will of defense and civilian security forces, government, and civil society. In Comoros, the Embassy will build on recent government achievements in addressing the country's Tier 3 Trafficking in Persons ranking.

Protecting Madagascar's unique ecosystems and biodiversity, as well as its other vast natural resources, are imperative in addressing global challenges of development, climate change, and environmental protection. Widespread extreme poverty and joblessness leave many Malagasies little choice but to turn to forests and other resources to survive. A weak business-enabling environment deters domestic and foreign private sector investment necessary for job creation and growth. The Mission will seek to promote the ease of investing and doing business in Madagascar and Comoros to attract trade and investment in support of the countries' inclusive and sustainable development that generates jobs and benefits for American workers and companies. The Mission will focus in particular on strengthening relationships with U.S. businesses. The Mission will also work to help Madagascar expand sustainable economic livelihoods, expanding opportunities for underrepresented and marginalized populations. It will partner with relevant actors to provide technical assistance and advocate for specific actions to mitigate the impacts of climate change, manage resources sustainably, and conserve precious biodiversity. The Embassy will also strive to enhance engagement with Comoros to improve its business climate and address its climate change and environmental challenges.

Countries derive fundamental strength from their populations. Building human capacity in both countries is key to addressing inequities; advancing democracy, rights, and governance; improving stability and security; and generating economic growth. The COVID-19 pandemic has stressed both countries' already weak social support infrastructure. Six years of climate-change

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related drought in southern Madagascar as well as the government's seeming lack of capacity to move forward on its own development goals, have left some 1.4 million people facing severe food insecurity and overtaxed the country's already weak and underperforming social safety nets. The Mission will continue its work to strengthen the health, education, and social structures that support the overall well-being of the nations' populations, focusing specifically on the marginalized to improve equity, inclusion, and accessibility. The Mission will also expand its contacts and engage representatives of marginalized populations while building and capitalizing on existing networks of program alumni to support opportunities for their enhanced social and political participation and leadership.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated challenges confronting Madagascar and the Comoros. Nevertheless, they have receptive governments and growing youthful populations that look to America for hope and opportunity. Modest investments now can yield large returns for U.S. interests in the not-so-distant future.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Unless otherwise indicated, all mission objectives and sub-objectives are for both Madagascar and Comoros.

Mission Goal 1: Madagascar and Comoros become reliable regional and global partners with strengthened inclusive democratic governance that promote stability and security.

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Government accountability, democracy, effectiveness, and citizen responsiveness improved. (USAID DO2)
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** Fundamental human rights promoted and protected, particularly for marginalized populations.
- **Mission Objective 1.3:** Inhospitable environment for transnational crime created through improved capacity and training and will of defense and civilian security forces, government, and civil society.

Mission Goal 2: Inclusive economic growth underpinned by mutually beneficial trade and investment and sustainable natural resources management.

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Enhanced relationships with the private sector, especially U.S. business interests, combined with an improved business environment to increase trade, tourism, and investments that spur economic growth. **Mission Objective 2.2:** Sustainable economic opportunities increased, particularly for underrepresented and marginalized populations, to enhance resilience. (USAID DO3 IRs 3.2 and 3.3)
- **Mission Objective 2.3:** Critical biodiversity conserved, natural resources secured, and climate change mitigated. (USAID DO3 IR 3.1)

Mission Goal 3: Madagascar and Comoros' human capacity strengthened as a foundation for country-owned democratic governance, security, and development.

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Citizens are healthier, better educated, and more resilient to withstand shocks, adapt to climate change, and drive their country's development. (USAIDDO1)
- **Mission Objective 3.2:** Capacity and participation of underrepresented groups expanded.

Management Objective 1: Management controls and accountability increased to better support mission goals effectively and efficiently.

Management Objective 2: Support services expanded to protect the health and safety of personnel, strengthen host country relationships, and allow for program monitoring.

Management Objective 3 Diversity, equitability, inclusivity, and accessibility advanced for the workforce at all levels.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1 | Madagascar and Comoros become reliable regional and global partners with strengthened inclusive democratic governance that promote stability and security.

Description | In Madagascar and Comoros, pursuing our national goals of revitalizing America's unmatched network of alliances and partnerships while leading first with democracy (as identified in the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance and Joint State-USAID Strategic Plan) means working to strengthen both nations' democratic foundations, broaden the inclusiveness of their systems, and bolster their security forces to grow their ability to be reliable partners. Madagascar and Comoros' cycles of political instability have greatly diminished their own growth potential as well as their effectiveness as partners able to assist in achieving mutual goals. U.S. efforts to strengthen democracy, governance, and rule of law in both countries serves our interest in bolstering stability in both countries and fostering bilateral partnerships to address shared global concerns.

Objective 1.1 | Government accountability, democracy, effectiveness, and citizen responsiveness improved (USAID DO2)

- **Justification** | Madagascar's performance in upholding the rule of law has deteriorated markedly since 2009. The World Justice Project 2019 Rule of Law Index ranks Madagascar 107 out of 126 countries for rule of law. Average Malagasy citizens have a limited understanding of the government's role and few civil society organizations are effective intermediaries able to channel and advocate for societal needs and demands. Though the GOM economic strategy cites "good governance and institutions" as a priority, corruption, enforcement of laws and regulations, access to and the quality of civil and criminal justice, and government accountability for the quality and availability of public services remain formidable challenges. This results in limited public engagement in democratic institutions and processes. With respect to public administration, the GOM does not efficiently use available human, financial, and

organizational resources; recruitment and promotion practices lack transparency; and officials often lack necessary managerial skills. The Mission will engage with other development partners to collaborate and complement efforts to strengthen judicial institutions and rule of law, improve government budget processes, increase civil society capacity, and increase transparency and citizen engagement. The Mission will build public awareness of the importance of good governance and the impact of corruption on Madagascar's development.

In the lead-up to Malagasy presidential and legislative elections in 2023, and Comorian elections in 2024, the Mission will promote free and fair elections and support civil and political liberties. The Embassy will bolster institutions and emphasize in its diplomatic and public communications the importance of independent and transparent election institutions and operations to the credibility of the democratic process.

- **Linkages** | Political stability and government accountability form the basis for Post to support the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance. These efforts specifically further the State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan objectives 3.1 and 3.3 by promoting good governance and defending strong, accountable, and resilient democracies that deliver for their citizens (3.1) and by preventing, exposing, and reducing corruption (3.3). In addition, work under this Mission Objective supports the Africa Joint Regional Strategy (Objective 3.3) and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Strategy (Goals 2 and 3) by bolstering transparency, accountability, and access to justice, improving state legitimacy in the eyes of the African public, and by strengthening civil society and independent media for democratic and accountable governance.
- **Risks** | Failure to meet this objective could lead to political destabilization, which has occurred periodically in both Madagascar and Comoros, and dramatically limit future economic growth, thereby putting in jeopardy the socio-economic futures of the current and next generation of citizens in both countries. Risks associated with not achieving this objective include: increased government corruption; further deterioration of public trust in government; lower rates of economic growth and private sector

investment; and increased marginalization of citizenry. Mission efforts promoting transparency, accountability, and citizen participation will serve to check the potential risks, while also ameliorating and improving the overall democratic landscape and foundations for economic growth.

Objective 1.2 | Fundamental human rights promoted and protected, particularly for marginalized populations

- **Justification |** The Department of State is Congressionally mandated to report on adherence to internationally recognized standards in human rights, child labor, trafficking in persons, and religious freedom in Madagascar and the Comoros. The Embassy explains and sensitizes governments and other interested parties to the findings of these reports and encourages governments to take steps to improve respect for human rights. The Embassy also facilitates and helps oversee programs to help Madagascar and Comoros combat human rights abuses, child labor, trafficking in persons, and discrimination on the basis of religion.

In addition to Congressionally mandated reporting requirements, the United States has an interest in encouraging countries around the world to respect specific freedoms and rights codified and guaranteed by international agreements. Examples include freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, labor rights, and the rights of children, women and ethnic minorities, the rights of LGBTQI+ persons, persons with disabilities, the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, and many others. Promoting respect for human rights globally is a fundamental value of the United States, that, among others, advances the United States' strategic goals vis-à-vis a global rise in authoritarianism and other malign influences. Promoting human rights globally also protects American citizens and American business interests. Adherence to human rights norms, such as labor rights, is a condition for some bilateral trade arrangements, such as the Africa Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA).

- **Linkages** | The Embassy's commitment to promote human rights directly supports broader Administration objectives. The White House Interim National Security Strategic Guidance states "Our work defending democracy does not end at our shores. Authoritarianism is on the global march, and we must join with likeminded allies and partners to revitalize democracy the world over.... We will defend and protect human rights and address discrimination, inequity, and marginalization in all its forms." The Embassy's promotion of human rights derives from the Functional Bureau Strategy of the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), which states: "The promotion of democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms strengthens U.S. national security because countries where political dissent is possible, corrupt or abusive officials are held accountable, and democratic institutions, the rule of law, gender equality, and the rights of marginalized groups are respected are more peaceful, secure, and prosperous and more able and willing to partner with the United States to address shared challenges." DRL's mission, as explained in the Functional Bureau Strategy, directly supports the Administration's Interim National Security Strategic Guidance and the Joint Strategic Plan. Additionally, the Bureau for Africa Joint Regional Strategy Objective 3.2 states "promote and protect fundamental human rights for all peoples, improving equality and inclusion".
- **Risks** | Promoting human rights, together with likeminded partners, is a core component of the United States' efforts to preserve the international order against authoritarianism. Failure to advance these objectives in Madagascar and Comoros would weaken conditions for vulnerable and marginalized populations, increase factors of instability, potentially lead to loss of access to preferential trade arrangements, increase risks to American citizens and business interests in these countries, and weaken the resilience of the governments and populations to withstand internal and external malign influences.

Objective 1.3 | Inhospitable environment for transnational crime created through improved capacity and will of defense and civilian security forces, government, and civil society.

- **Justification** | The location of Madagascar and the Comoros along major sea lanes in the Western Indian Ocean and high external demand for the countries' diminishing endemic resources fuel illicit trade and the activity of international criminal networks in the region. This lucrative trade fuels local corruption, creates a political environment that is permissive towards transnational crime, and leaves Madagascar and Comoros vulnerable to the influence of unscrupulous foreign actors. The countries do not have the means to purchase, or continue funding, equipment necessary to effectively conduct operations aimed at addressing these concerns. Capacity deficits in law enforcement, maritime domain awareness, patrolling ability, and port security remain key challenges. Post will undertake a variety of programs and activities aimed at improving the capability and willingness of governments, security forces, and civil society to combat transnational crime (e.g.: illegal fishing, natural resource trafficking, and piracy) and safeguard vulnerable populations against extremist influences.
- **Linkages** | An inhospitable environment for transnational crime will safeguard natural resources that benefit the United States and the world. It will also preserve valuable assets needed for the long-term economic development, bolster mutually beneficial trade, support democracy, protect biodiversity, and foster regional stability. An inhospitable environment for transnational crime supports the objectives in the Joint Regional Strategy, the Joint Security Plan, the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, and Secretary of State Climate Crisis Guidance. This objective also supports the Joint Strategic plan objective 1.4 - Revitalize U.S. alliances and partnerships to prevent, deter, and resolve conflicts and address international security challenges.
- **Risks** | Madagascar and Comoros are high priority countries for conservation due to their exceptional biodiversity, high degree of endemism, and the advanced state of environmental destruction (particularly in Madagascar). Unchecked illegal fishing, natural resource trafficking, and piracy risk the permanent loss of irreplaceable resources while bolstering transnational criminal networks that undermine regional

stability and pose a threat to security of the United States. Extreme poverty and more frequent natural disasters can erode the ability of institutions and populations to stand up to malign actors. Failure to bolster security forces respect for democratic values and their capacity to deliver assistance risks further weakening institutions and radicalization of vulnerable populations they are intended to protect.

Mission Goal 2 | Inclusive economic growth underpinned by mutually beneficial trade and investment and sustainable natural resources management.

Description | As the Mission strives to improve the capacity of Madagascar and Comoros to be strong partners, it will work with both countries to increase trade and investment opportunities that will mutually benefit all three nations, broadening the benefits beyond a privileged few for more inclusive economic growth as identified in the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance and in support of Goal 2 of the State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan, promoting global prosperity, including for the United States. To do this, the Mission will seek to build coalitions to tackle formidable global climate change challenges. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, Madagascar already struggled with extreme poverty, inequality, and devastation of its natural resources. The pandemic has only exacerbated these challenges. Given the vast biodiversity and resource endowment of both countries, helping the islands manage their natural resources in a sustainable manner is key to advancing our climate change priorities. Helping Madagascar and Comoros drive inclusive economic growth is also key to promoting stability and fostering stronger partnerships. The U.S. seeks to spur economic growth, trade, and investment in Madagascar and Comoros by enhancing private sector relationships and promoting improved business environments in both countries.

Objective 2.1 | Enhanced relationships with the private sector, especially U.S. business interests, combined with an improved business environment to increase trade, tourism, and investments that spur economic growth

- **Justification** | Madagascar's future success in attracting foreign investment and jumpstarting local private sector business initiatives depends in large part on its ability to show major improvements in the country's ease of doing business. Bureaucracy and wide-spread corruption impede the activities of existing businesses and inhibit new investment by both international and local businesses. USG support to financial inclusion efforts will increase the population's capacity to obtain funding necessary for small and medium-sized businesses and contribute to bilateral trade. The focus on fiscal transparency, digitization, and reduction in customs delays will provide U.S. companies with a more level playing field when they enter this market. Measures to improve government and private sector capacity on trade-related issues will increase bilateral trade and foster transparency. As the Mission increases engagement in Comoros, it will increase its contacts and forge stronger relationships, particularly with American citizens and businesses in Comoros. Supporting an environment where Americans can safely travel and conduct business will help attract U.S. investment.
- **Linkages** | This objective supports the Joint Regional Strategy's Goal 2 "increase mutually beneficial economic growth, trade and investment;" the Joint Strategic Plan's Objective 2.1 to "promote a global economy that creates opportunities for all Americans;" and the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance's goal to promote American prosperity by encouraging improvements to business enabling environments and enhanced trade and investment between the United States and Africa through whole-of-government engagement.
- **Risks** | Failure to achieve this objective will lead to continued economic stagnation, below potential growth, and lack of investment critical to decreasing the staggering levels of poverty. The U.S. will miss important trade and investment opportunities and Mission efforts to promote inclusive and sustainable economic

development, political stability, and security will be undermined. We will continue to engage with our partners to mitigate these risks.

Objective 2.2 | Sustainable economic opportunities increased, particularly for underrepresented and marginalized populations, to enhance resilience (USAID DO3 IRs 3.2 and 3.3)

- **Justification** | Both Madagascar and Comoros have high levels of poverty, and limited opportunities for improved livelihoods for most of the population, particularly women and minority groups. In Madagascar, about 80 percent of the population works in the agriculture sector and is living at or below the poverty line; many rural households engage in more than one economic activity to meet daily needs; and the majority of economic assets are controlled by a small minority of actors. Inclusive economic growth that fosters job creation and economic opportunity requires private sector engagement. Yet, private sector investment and production is constrained by the lack of organized supply chains, deficiencies in access to physical capital (including road infrastructure and electricity), and obstacles to accessing land. For private sector production to increase, smallholder farmers, fishermen, social enterprises, and other informal actors need access to financing and to pursue climate smart practices. Women are particularly disadvantaged as social norms frequently prevent women from having collateral, such as land, needed to obtain a loan. Alternatives to loans from banks and micro-finance institutions are needed to bridge financing gaps; focusing on establishing a culture of savings through village savings and loans associations has shown promise.
- **Linkages** | This objective supports the Joint Strategic Plan's Objective 2.2 to "support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and opportunity for communities around the globe." It also supports the Joint Regional Strategy's Objective 2.2 to "expand African capacity and technological innovation to foster effective participation in global markets" and the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance's goal "promote American prosperity." Additionally, Madagascar is a named country under AGOA, Power Africa, and included in several climate change and regional environment efforts.

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- **Risks** | Inclusive and sustainable growth is essential for progress in the social and political sectors, and it is a key factor in maintaining and strengthening democracy. Failure to promote greater inclusive growth, private sector investment, and environment-friendly growth will continue to allow malevolent economic actors to take advantage and control profits at the expense of the development and livelihoods of the majority of the population. It will also deter domestic and international investment. The absence of more inclusive economic growth will further marginalize the poor and undermine political and economic stability. Mission efforts are aimed at supporting a more equitable foundation for inclusive growth and private sector (domestic and international) investment.

Objective 2.3 | Critical biodiversity conserved, natural resources secured, and climate change mitigated. (USAIDDO3 IR 3.1)

- **Justification** | Madagascar is home to remarkable biodiversity, 90 percent of which is endemic. Eighty percent of the population lives in rural areas and depends heavily upon natural resources to meet daily needs, whether forests for timber, charcoal, firewood, fertile soil for agriculture, or the water and rain provided by ecosystem services. Agriculture, the main activity for 80 percent of people living in rural areas, accounts for 24 percent of GDP and 70 percent of export earnings. With 5,600 kilometers of coastline and an Exclusive Economic Zone that extends over more than a million square kilometers, fisheries and coastal activities are very important. Fisheries accounts for 7 percent of GDP, 6.6 percent of national exports and employ 1.5 million people. Tourism, which in 2019 accounted for 16.1 percent of GDP, is entirely dependent on the conservation of natural resources. Madagascar's economic development is thus founded upon its natural resources that need to be managed sustainably for future generations. At the same time, climate change poses a major challenge to economic growth. Madagascar is the fourth most at risk country in the world due to its heavy reliance on rain-fed agriculture, its enormous coastline at risk of flooding due to sea level rise and the increase in drought, variable rainfall, and cyclones.

Rampant deforestation of the island's critical ecosystems has converted Madagascar from a net carbon sink to a net emitter, making it more vulnerable to extreme weather and temperature fluctuations. The impacts of climate change need to be mitigated and people's ability to adapt increased to ensure that economic and development gains are not lost.

- **Linkages** | Madagascar is a Tier 1 Biodiversity country and thus a priority for USG investment. Climate change mitigation and adaptation are key priorities of the U.S. Administration and the USG has made ambitious commitments to affect change. These include the State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan Objective 1.2 - Secure ambitious climate mitigation and adaptation outcomes, including supporting effective Paris Agreement implementation, and 2.4 - Strengthen U.S. and global resilience to economic, technological, environmental, and other systemic shocks. Also included are the USG Plan to Conserve Global Forests: Critical Carbon Sinks, the DOS Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan, the PREPARE (22 STATE 5372) and AIM for Climate initiatives, the Methane pledge, the net-zero by 2050 target. (Ref 21 STATE 97546) Climate change and secured natural resources, such as access to water and marine domain control, have been highlighted in national security policies, including the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance.
- **Risks** | Poor management of natural resources could lead to further humanitarian crises similar to Madagascar's drought-stricken South. Continued deforestation or even a future without natural forests would lead to a decrease in rainfall and soil erosion would worsen; together this would lead to a considerable reduction in agricultural productivity and an increase in food insecurity. Desertification could expand, leaving millions of people destitute. Without wood and charcoal, 90 percent of the population would not have fuel for cooking. Overfishing and species collapse would significantly reduce the availability of protein and would leave many without a livelihood. Climate change in the form of more cyclones, drought, sea level rise, and variable rainfall poses a huge risk to current and future economic production, especially to agriculture and

infrastructure. The costs of rebuilding or relocating people from cyclones, flooding and drought would be enormous.

Mission Goal 3 | Madagascar and Comoros' human capacity strengthened as a foundation for country-owned democratic governance, security, and development

Description | The core resource that allows nations to prosper remains their people.

Partnering with Madagascar and Comoros to improve the health, education, and ability to participate in government helps support all other Mission objectives. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated already formidable challenges for economic development and social structures that both nations face. In addition, the current drought's effect on food security has demonstrated the need to build capacity and resilience in Madagascar. To recover and build future resilience, Madagascar and Comoros will need to strengthen human capacity. Investing in social systems that build human capacity and promote greater inclusion of underrepresented groups supports the Mission's achievement of all its goals. This work specifically supports the State-USAID Strategic Plan Objective 3.2 to advance equity, accessibility, and rights for all by breaking down barriers through improving capacity, skills, health status, and opportunities.

Objective 3.1 | Citizens are healthier, better educated, and more resilient to withstand shocks, adapt to climate change, and drive their country's development (*USAID DO1*) **Justification |**

Human resources are under-developed and under-leveraged due

to limited access to high-quality health, education, and social protection and disaster response services. Human capacity building is the process by which individuals, communities, groups, organizations, institutions, and societies develop their abilities, both individually and collectively, to set and achieve objectives, perform functions, solve problems, and develop the means and conditions required to enable this process. High levels of poverty and poor outcomes in health and education leave citizens ill-equipped to participate in civic and economic activities or respond to unexpected shocks. Under Objective 3.1, health, education, and inclusion of women and marginalized groups

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address individual and institutional needs that together will lead to healthier, better educated, and more resilient citizens.

- **Linkages** | Unhealthy and marginalized people are less resilient to shocks. Conversely, equitable access to quality health and education services and economic opportunities all play a role in protecting individuals, families, and communities from economic, health, natural disaster, and other shocks. Healthy and educated citizens who are engaged in sustainable livelihoods are better able to positively influence economic, social, and democratic governance progress. Madagascar is a water focus country for the United States and part of the President's Malaria Initiative. This Mission Objective aligns with Sustainable Development Goals and supports U.S. Administration strategies. In particular, it supports achievement of the Joint Regional Strategy Goal 4 to build the region's resilience and also supports Objectives 3.5, 1.1, and 2.4 of the Joint Strategic Plan to improve inclusive and equitable essential services, strengthen global health security, and strengthen resilience to shocks.
- **Risks** | The lack of domestic funding to the national health and education systems in Madagascar and heavy dependence on donor funding for health is a risk to sustaining short-term gains in the longer-term. Failure to more fully engage private sector actors will continue to limit the equitable availability of basic health and education services to women and marginalized groups. Persistent waves of COVID-19 redirect human resources for health to COVID response efforts, and the slow rollout of COVID vaccination to 70 percent of the population will continue to require massive diversion of healthcare personnel to vaccinating the public. The effects of COVID-19 will remain a risk to achievement of many development objectives on the health, education, and economic lives of citizens. The impacts of climate change will continue to affect disease transmission and availability of water and food. Resistance to policy and operational changes and frequent changes at the Ministry level can impede achievement of goals.

Objective 3.2 | Capacity and participation of underrepresented groups expanded.

- **Justification** | Madagascar and Comoros are both countries where the vast majority of resources, power, and opportunity are controlled by an elite few centered in the capital. The geographic peripheries, ethnic and religious minorities, women, the disabled, and the vast populations of economically disadvantaged have limited means to succeed on their nation's economic and political stages due to the systemic inequities built into the governing systems. These inequities extend to the education, social, and health systems, deepening the systemic disadvantages faced by non-elites.
- **Linkages** | Making access to political and economic systems more equitable supports the democracy and human rights objectives of the Administration's Interim National Security Strategic Guidance and the Joint Strategic Plan by confronting attempts by malign actors to impede other countries' democratic processes and redefine the international rules-based order; promoting gender equality and advancing racial equity at home and abroad; advancing the rights, dignity, and full inclusion of all persons with disabilities, LGBTI+ persons, and other marginalized populations. This objective particularly supports Objective 3.2 in the Joint Strategic Plan: Advance equity, accessibility, and rights for all.
- **Risks** | Failure to broaden access to economic and political power will undermine democracy and perpetuate a vulnerability to malign and corrupt actors, allowing them to gain control over invaluable natural resources, win political concessions, and increase their influence over policy and decision-making. Post will pursue activities to create more broad-based access to political power and economic opportunity as well as more equitable development, which will enable both nations to move toward a future where the governance and development legitimately reflect the will of the people and reliably serve the interests of the governed.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1 | Management controls and accountability increased to better support mission goals effectively and efficiently.

- **Justification** | Continuing updates by the Department to the electronic applications and databases used for management controls, without sufficient training and unstable workforce due to transitions and global health crisis, are placing additional strains on accountability in resource management. Growing demand for resources to mitigate worsening local conditions and infrastructure requires strengthening of existing controls to safeguard performance and deter fraud and mismanagement.
- **Linkages** | This objective works to maximize taxpayers' returns on investment and enhance accountability by integrating and improving the quality of speed and methods by which missions deliver goods and services and enhance workforce performance goals by developing training plans utilizing technological platforms (JRS 1/15/21 - Management Objective 1: Advance Diplomatic and Development Effectiveness to Increase Accountability to the American Taxpayer).
- **Risks** | Risks include non-compliance with Department policies and regulations resulting in increased audits, inspections, waste, fraud, and mismanagement of Government resources.

Management Objective 2 | Support services expanded to protect the health and safety of personnel, strengthen host country relationships, and allow for program monitoring

- **Justification** | Worsening air quality and frequent city water outage adversely affect the health and safety of Mission personnel. Lack of dependable air and ground transportation, suitable accommodation, and reliable communication networks severely limit the ability of the Mission personnel to effectively liaise with counterparts and

partners and monitor implementation of programs. Limited availability of translation and interpretation services in non-capital regions impede effective communication and public messaging.

- **Linkages:** Improving services and strengthening relationships is linked to JRS - Management Objective 1: Advance Diplomatic and Development Effectiveness to Increase Accountability to the American Taxpayer.
- **Risks |** If post living conditions such as access to potable water supplies and indoor air quality do not meet minimum required housing standards, Post's ability to recruit and retain mission critical personnel could be diminished. Mission goals may be delayed or not be met when varied modes of transportation and other services such as reliable internet or phone services are unavailable.

Management Objective 3 | Diversity, equitability, inclusivity, and accessibility advanced for the workforce at all levels.

- **Justification |** A workforce that reflects the diversity of the local population, is treated fairly, and can work together will better support mission goals.
- **Linkages:** This objective aligns with JRS- Management Objective 1: Advance Diplomatic and Development Effectiveness to Increase Accountability to the American Taxpayer. This objective also aligns with Department Guidance on promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- **Risks |** Outdated operational platforms cannot support new technology and a highly skilled workforce is not viable when mission critical positions or eligible family member positions remain unassigned or unfilled, local staff seek employment elsewhere, and Mission objectives and goals are jeopardized.