

## Characterization of the Agrarian System for Agricultural Development in Anjouan (Comoros)

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### Abstract

*Anjouan is one of the 4 islands that make up the Union of Comoros, it has natural resources favorable to the development of the agricultural sector ; yet its of agricultural households are significantly vulnerable. Since, 1975 the date when the comoros became indepent, Anjouan, like the other islands of the Union of the Comoros, has benefited from support, programs and various agricultural development strategies wech aimed in at sustaining the rural environment as a whole. Interventions are provided by the various development actors on the ground, naimely NGOs, successive governments, agricultural cooperatives and projects by institutions supporting the agricultural sector. However, the vulnerability of farmers is increasing day by day and the expected results in terms of development are still facing obstacles. In the light of these observations, this article focuses on the analysis of farms and their impact on socio-economic development in order to improve the living conditions of the Anjouanese population.*

**Keywords:** Anjouan, vulnerabl, agricultural development, actor, rural areas, farm.

### INTRODUCTION

Anjouan covers a surface of 424 sq km, and has the highest population density in the Union of Comoros (SOIFFAOUIDDINE, 2011). Its inhabitants have always relied on agricultural activities and natural resources for their survival. The island of Anjouan benefits from a

natural environment and a favorable environment for the development of agricultural operations. Anjouan is separated from Moheli Island by 75 km and from Madagascar by at least 300 kms. It has good trade relations with neighboring islands and countries, notably Moheli, Madagascar and Tanzania. It has also benefited from agricultural investments by development actors for more than 40 years, since the country became independent in 1975. Furthermore, the political context of this island is very special. The island has enjoyed a very remarkable political stability. In August 1997, seceded from the rest of the comoros (Halftermeyer, 2012). After 9 years of crises between Anjouan and the other islands of the Comoros, on 17 February 2001 a framework agreement for reconciliation was hammered in Fomboni the capitalaty of Moheli, the smalled island of the archipelago. This accord led paved the way to the establishment of a new constitution which set up a four-year rotating government for each island of the union of Comoros. The country has amended its constitution several times. The latest amendement occured on july 31, 2018. The political instability that has plagued the country for decades, could not allow the farmers to improve their living standards, nor facilitate a harmonious socio-economic development for the country as a in whole and particularly on the island of Anjouan. In this perspective, several private actors, NGOs, cooperatives, farmers' groups, projects and donors are intervening to help farmers to revive the agricultural sector, but difficulties still persist. Among the actors involved in the agricultural sector, some provide technical support and others financial support. These include the World Bank, IFAD, UNDP, FAO, the European Union, the French Cooperation, Japan, the Dahari NGO, the Araf NGO, the Ami project and certain financial institutions such as microfinance institutions. These players are intervening in a significant way to revive agricultural activities and development in the country, particularly on the island of Anjouan. Indeed, the economy of the island is largely agricultural. This subsistence farming on cludes grouving eash crop such as vanilla, ylang-ylang and cloves. According (Yuselys, 2009) half of the population lives below the poverty live. The economic situation of the country is also characterized by essentially subsistence agriculture with less than little 52.7% of GDP and a tertiary sector with 36% of GDP (MAOULANA, 2014). It is largely dominated by import activities which hinder for the economic development of the country. In another

context, according to IFAD in 2007, the Comorian society is a traditionally islamic and matrimonial society with women occupying an unusual place in it : actually they inherit all family land in Grande Comores and part of the land in the other two islands, and the houses belong to them. With regard to the technical situation, the Union of the Comoros, like most developing countries, face huge technical problems in the agricultural sector. Therefore, if the technical problems are found in all the islands of the Union of Comoros, those of the island of Anjouan are very serious. This severity is linked to a unevenly geographical structure with a very high population density (over 600 inhabitants per sq km), the lack of tools and employment (salaried labor) and the insufficiency of fallow land in cultural rotations. In addition, the Comorian environmental context reveals the existence of a rich and varied biological diversity. In many cases, habitats and associated species are deteriorated or in the process of being deteriorated by the combined effect of natural and anthropic actions (SOIFFAOUIDDINE, 2011). Thus, the terrestrial ecosystems undergo a series of aggressions, deforestation, slash and burn cultivation (AMBDILLAH, 2012). In addition, of the 45 permanent rivers on the island of Anjouan, about 30 of them have become intermittent since 1975 (Mirhani,2014). In addition, the island is experiencing a climate change problem with negative effects on crop yields.

The island of Anjouan has many problems that prevent agricultural development from taking place. The predominantly rural population has reached a critical level where almost all the land has been cultivated and the soil is degraded. Several actions are also to be noted such as the loss of fertility of arable land. The most cultivated land is becoming poorer and poorer until it becomes infertile. Farmers obtain more fertile land in the highlands by appropriating several hectares of forest where there is no motorization possible on these slopes and the machete generally remains the only tool used by farmers in their activities. Other problems are added on the farmers notably the climatic change which has effects on the non mastery of the calendars of culture, the insufficiency of the techniques of valorization of the ground, the use of the traditional methods and the employment of the agriculture in small plots but also the lack of specialized training for the improvement and the increase of the production. Thus, in this article, it is essential to study all aspects

that can contribute to agricultural development through peasant practices and the logic of the various actors on the farms. The analysis of human dynamics (rural population, agricultural assets, gender of the farmer, etc.), economic dynamics (farms, typology of plantations, cultivated areas, production, yields, etc.), technical dynamics (tools, equipment, etc. ), technical (tools, equipment and various inputs for the use of farmers and productive activity) on the one hand, and on the other hand, the way in which all these aspects are implemented by the actors to contribute to effective agricultural development constitute the way to elucidate the current situation of Comorian agriculture in general and in particular that of the island of Anjouan.

The main question of this research is why the Anjouanese farming system, which benefits from an ecological environment and agro-soil conditions that are favorable to farming, is not able to satisfy the population's food needs and thus, on the one hand, to remove local consumers from dependence on neighboring countries and islands (Moheli, Madagascar and Tanzania) and, on the other hand, to contribute to the improvement of their own food security. To answer this question, we propose to examine the case of farms in four municipality, namely Tsembéhou, Koni Djodjo, Adda à Niyoumakélé and Moya. Our study consists of examining the links that may exist between agricultural households and the practices of the actors in order to bring innovations for the future improvement of the pauperization of the island's farmers.

The overall objective of this article is, on the one hand, to understand the current context of farms in Anjouan and the obstacles that hinder the development of these farms and, on the other hand, to reorient development policies and provide food for thought for development actors and donors on the strategies to be adopted for the development of farms in the country in general and in Anjouan in particular.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Study area**

The study was conducted in four municipality located in distinct regions of the island of Anjouan. These were the commune of Tsembéhou, in the central part of the island, the commune of Adda in the Niyoumakélé region, in the southern part of Anjouan, the

municipality of Koni djodjo, in the eastern part, and the municipality of Moya in the western part of the island. The island is subject to a humid tropical climate with rainfall ranging from 1371 mm/year in Mramani in the south to more than 3000 mm/year in the center, with little variation in annual temperatures around 25 C on the coasts, lower in altitude (Halftermeyer, 2012). These communes were sectioned in a reasoned manner among 20 communes on the island. The criteria for choosing these 4 areas were made after a preliminary study of observation of each area. This was based on the methodological approach to the environment described in the guide "Diagnosis of production systems" by Isabelle Touzard and Nicolas Ferraton (2009). In fact, field observation was carried out and provided knowledge of the soil, crops and farming methods in the four regions (Adda, Koni-djodjo, Moya and Tsembéhou). In each municipality, 20 to 30 farmers were surveyed according to the nature of their socio-professional activities, the constraints related to agricultural activities, the interventions of the various actors in agricultural activities, etc.

In addition, a total of 100 farmers were surveyed. An interview guide, an individual questionnaire and a focus group were used to collect data. During the interviews with farm households, information was collected on agricultural and pastoral activities, management methods of farmers' organizations, equipment, possible access to financing for their agricultural activities, and projects that intervene or have intervened in their activities. Other interviews were also conducted with other institutions such as the customs center on the island of Anjouan to obtain information on the evolution of cash crop exports over the past ten years, microfinance, NGOs, and regional production and agricultural directorates.

### **Data collection**

Data collection took into account the typology of farmers. This typology was established according to different criteria that make it possible to characterize all of the situations and contexts of agricultural households and the interventions of the different actors with respect to farmers in Anjouan, such as

- ✓ The level of education of household heads
- ✓ The agricultural activities/culture practiced
- ✓ Access to possible financing for farmers

- ✓ The amount of agricultural land used
- ✓ Whether or not agriculture is practiced in the forest
- ✓ The practice / of breeding / of fishing / of handicraft
- ✓ The destination of the agricultural products
- ✓ The materials used etc...

### **Data analysis**

Data were analyzed in Excel and Spad software. A descriptive analysis was first performed to determine the main characteristics mean, frequency and standard deviation. The continuous variables used were age, quantities produced, production, crop practiced, labor, training, member of a cooperative, etc. The objective was to see the correlation between the variables.

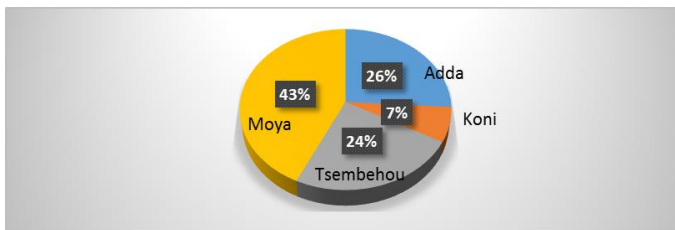
Next, data collected at the level of the regional customs office of Anjouan Island were analyzed to see the evolution of exports of cash crops and also to see the evolution of prices on these products at the local level in order to see the impacts on farmers.

## **RESULTS**

### **1. Characterization of the farms in the study areas**

The survey work carried out in the field made it possible to extract the characteristics of household farms in the areas studied. The information collected concerns crop and livestock production systems. The information on fishing is not established because of the absence of this activity in some of the study areas already selected. The average size of farms corresponding to the cultivable area of the farmers was elaborated by zone, only the commune of Moya that the agricultural households display large farms.

**Figure 1: Presentation of the cultivable areas of agricultural households**



Source : 2020 survey author

Indeed, the main cropping systems identified are food crops, which represent 47% of farms, cash crops represent about 14%, and vegetable crops represent 39%. The main food crops grown in Anjouan, but also in the study areas, are cassava, taro, bananas and ambrevades. These products are intended for self-consumption. Agroforestry crops combine cash crops, fruit trees such as coconut and breadfruit. Cash crops are dominated by clove trees. The following figure shows the landscape dominated by clove trees in the commune of Tsembéhou.

**Figure 2: Clove tree landscape in Anjouan.**



The main vegetables grown in the study areas are potatoes, cabbage, tomatoes, and carrots. The municipality of Tsembéhou is known as the main supplier of vegetables on the island of Anjouan. The climate in this locality is the main reason for the abundance of vegetables compared to other regions of the island of Anjouan.

## **2. Constraints related to livestock activities**

The livestock sector is a secondary activity for Anjouanese farmers. There are no pure breeders on the island as a whole, particularly in our study area, only agro-breeders. In Anjouan, livestock production is essentially dominated by cattle, goats, sheep and poultry. The breeding of these animals is intended for the local market and for the consumption of the farmers, only in Niyoumakele on the island of Anjouan is cattle breeding used in the fields as a source of organic fertilizer. This breeding is unable to satisfy the local demand for meat, forcing the country to import a large amount of meat from outside, i.e., about 24,593 tons in 2017 compared to 13,212 tons in 2015 (Central Bank of Comoros, 2017). The results carried out in the field showed that the majority of farmers do both agriculture and livestock. For farmers who do this livestock activity, few exceed five head of cattle, goats, or sheep. This activity is threatened by the problem of

livestock theft and meat imports. Thus, this activity is a sub-sector for farmers on the island of Anjouan compared to agriculture, but it still contributes to the fight against household poverty and also allows households to have a means of saving that can be quickly mobilized in case of emergency.

### **3. Identification of the different constraints related to the development of farms**

#### **3.1 Socio-political aspect: political instability and insecurity linked to crop theft**

The country's agricultural development problems date back to the day after the country gained national sovereignty. Since the Comoros gained independence in 1975, the country has experienced chronic political instability marked by some thirty coups d'état over more than twenty years. In 2001, to get the Comoros out of the political crises, an agreement was signed in Moheli, called the Fomboni agreement and the foundation of the Union of the Comoros with the presidency rotating between the three islands every four years. It was during periods of political instability that rural development was put at stake through policies of favoritism and nepotism. In Comoros, rural development policies and programs have been in place since then, but the reality is different. Poverty, especially in rural areas, continues to increase. The following table shows the incidence of poverty in 2014 by environment in percentage.

**Table 1: Incidence of poverty by area (%)**

	Food insecurity	Extreme poverty	Overall poverty
Urban	11,6	24,3	31,9
Rural	28,7	43,1	52,2
Comoros	21,9	35,6	44,1

Source : African Development Bank Group 2014

Poverty in rural areas affects 52.2 percent of the population, or slightly more than one in two people, according to the African Development Bank's 2014 group on the dimensions of poverty in Comoros. This situation leads to insecurity in rural areas and has impacted for household farms. In addition, insecurity related to crop theft is a significant problem in rural areas. Thefts from the field generally occur during harvest periods. Some localities organize



village committees and guard the fields to no avail. In most cases, the thieves are caught and handed over to the competent authorities, particularly the local gendarmerie, but the next day they are seen circulating in the villages, which discourages some farmers from engaging in agricultural activities. The theft of animals, particularly cows, was also mentioned by local players during our interviews. These thefts are difficulties that farm households face on a daily basis and put agricultural activities at risk in the study areas.

### **3.2 Socio-cultural aspect : Farming occupied by a minority of farmers**

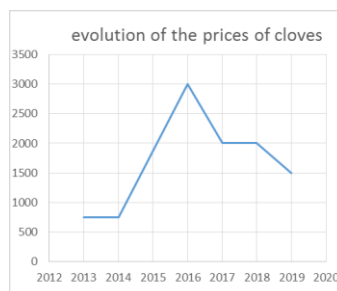
Several socio-cultural factors are at the root of the obstacles to the development of farms in Anjouan, including the emigration of young farmers to the other islands, small-scale commercial activities as a substitute for agriculture, and the laziness of the population not to engage in the agricultural sector. Indeed, emigration of young farmers to the other two islands of the Union of the Comoros and Mayotte has become commonplace. This emigration is not a solution for the rural population of Anjouan and only the emigration to Mayotte brings a hope of better living. In the market of the capital *volvo-volvo*, the majority of young people are Anjouanese, especially in the rural areas. In Moheli 45% of the population is Anjouanese. However, 30% of the population of Mayotte are Anjouanese, 80% of whom live in hiding. For many young Anjouanese, the journey to Mayotte is a hope for a better life, even at the risk of their lives, and a way to help their families in the country. It should be noted that since 1995, because of a visa imposed by the then French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, thousands of our people have died just for trying to reach the island of Mayotte and there is talk of more than 10,000 dead or missing in the sea. In addition, the emigration of young people to Mayotte and the other islands means that the agricultural sector in Anjouan is staffed by very old men who are unable to provide a productive agricultural workforce. In addition, the lack of value added to agricultural products and the fall in prices for agricultural products means that many farmers are engaging in small-scale commercial activities as an alternative to agriculture, and this is also causing some farmers to lose interest in agriculture.

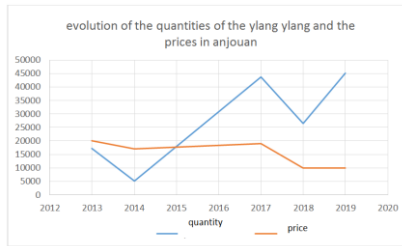
### **3.3 Economic aspect : price variations of cash crops**

Fluctuating prices for cash crops on the national and international markets are a major constraint for farmers on Anjouan Island. During our interviews with some local actors, price fluctuations for cash crops were often mentioned by farmers as an important problem for them, but also for all farmers on the island of Anjouan. Cloves, vanilla and ylang-ylang are the main cash crops produced in the Comoros, particularly in Anjouan. In recent years, the prices of these products have deteriorated sharply, forcing some farmers to abandon their crops and even to cut down their trees in the case of clove trees and ylang-ylang. The Asian crisis of recent years and the fires that affected the countryside and the Indonesian forests have benefited Comorian producers, particularly those on the island of Anjouan. Producers have seen an increase in sales and income during this period. Based on what farmers told us during our interviews, the following dates are remembered by all.

- In 2000, during the period of Colonel Abed's leadership of Anjouan, farmers witnessed an increase in the price of cloves from 250 KMF per kilo to 2,000 KMF per kilo, or from 1 cent to 4 euros per kilo. According to the farmers, during this period, even the Anjouanese from Mayotte came down to harvest cloves.
- 2002, fall in the price of cloves in the local market.
- 2014 to 2015 : these dates concern the increase not only of clove but also of vanilla and ylang-ylang. The price of a kg of clove was 4000 KMF or about 8 euro per kg, the price of ylang ylang was 2000 KMF or about 4 euro and the price of green vanilla was 25 000 KMF or about 50 euro per kg.

### **Evolution of cash crop exports in Anjouan**





Source : author 2020

Anjouan's export products are cash crops, notably cloves, ylang-ylang and vanilla. Over the past ten years, these products have been subject to variations in quantities and prices, leading to a deterioration in the income of agricultural households. These products are exported to several countries in the world, notably Europe, Asia, the United Arab Emirates and the United States. The quantities of cloves exported in tons from 2012 to 2014 in Anjouan are increasingly constant with a decline in prices. Related literature reviews show that the international market is subject to fluctuations in production but also to a lack of structuring with uncertain supply and demand (Abdou, N, M., 2013). Indeed, from 2014 to 2018, there is a large quantity of cloves produced and exported to Anjouan accompanied by a sharp increase in the price of cloves on the local market. This is a situation that can be explained through the theory of production according to the classics. The higher the price of a good, the more people tend to increase their production quantities and devote more labor to that good. In Anjouan, during this period, producers took advantage of this price increase to sell off even their stocks of cloves in stores. On the other hand, from 2018 to 2020, the price of cloves has fallen locally and this decline has led to a decrease in the quantities exported. This situation calls on the various actors to act in the field to structure the producers and inform them about the situation of the national and international market.

Ylang-ylang is the most important cash crop for producers on the island of Anjouan in terms of income for farmers after cloves. Comoros produces about 50% to 60% of the world market needs, which vary between 100 and 120 tons per year. Almost all the production is done in Anjouan and a small part for the other islands, notably Moheli and Grand Comoros. France is the leading importer of ylang-ylang production in Comoros. From 2012 to 2014, the island of Anjouan

recorded a decline in the quantities produced by producers. This decline can be explained by a drop in local prices as well as by competition from other producing countries. From 2014 to 2018, the island of Anjouan recorded a sharp increase in the quantities produced and exported of ylang-ylang with a stabilization of prices, thanks to a competitiveness of this product at the local level. On the other hand, 2017 to 2019, ylang-ylang has experienced fluctuations in terms of quantity and a decline in price. This is a situation that has been caused in some way by some local producers by mixing essential oils of ylang-ylang with edible vegetable oils. This is a problem that has affected not only the quality of the island's essential oils but also the decrease in foreign currency inflows to the island. The vanilla product in Anjouan follows the same fate as ylang-ylang with price fluctuations and a drop in production each year often caused by the demotivation of producers in the sector.

### **3.4 Insufficient funding for agricultural activities**

A key sector for rural development in Anjouan, the agricultural sector suffers from enormous problems related to its financing. The various interventions in the agricultural sector since independence have not been able to solve the problem of agricultural development. Financial and technical support from various institutions, notably the State, microfinance and the various NGOs involved in the agricultural sector, remains very limited. In the case of microfinance, during our interviews in the field, many farm households remain reluctant to take up this issue. According to the results of the survey, 92% of them say that they cannot dare to make loans in financial institutions in order to finance their farms for reasons related to the problems of credit repayment and the very high interest rates. It should be noted that many farmers in Comoros do not have the knowledge and skills required to access finance through the formal credit system and those who do are often considered unattractive clients because of a history of default. Some representatives of even financial institutions also point to the risks and losses on the granting of loans to rural clients to slow down the granting of credit to farmers. Indeed, as far as the Comorian state is concerned, in theory, projects to support rural farmers exist in its programs and politicians' speeches are often pronounced, but in practice households are still vulnerable and rarely benefit from state support. During our interviews with farm

households, many of them kept asking for state support for their farming activities, especially in difficult periods such as the covid-19 health period, to no avail. Some farm households did not even want to answer us sometimes on the surveys under the pretext that they were tired with surveys without results. For the interventions of the various NGOs in the study areas, the results show little involvement of NGOs in the agricultural sector. Of all the households surveyed, only 40% had received assistance from either the government or another support institution, particularly existing NGOs. According to the households, even if there are subsidies, not all farmers can benefit from them. Sometimes, in order to benefit from a subsidy, one must first be recognized or be a member of a cooperative. However, some cooperatives already select their members. These conditions already exclude a large majority of farmers from the system.

### **3.5 Other aspects related to the problem of developing the agricultural sector in Anjouan**

Other factors also contribute in one way or another to hindering the development of farms in Anjouan, but also influence the household cropping system. The place of cash crops in relation to food crops, the associated cropping system, the tools used by households, the amount of space available for cultivation, the amount of time allocated to agriculture, and climate change are among the obstacles that prevent agricultural development in Anjouan. Cash crops such as clove and ylang-ylang occupy a very important place in the cultivable area, thus influencing the expansion of other food crops. In addition, the system of cultivation, especially food crops, combining several crops, is still practiced in the study areas and on the island of Anjouan. Farmers use the technique of intercropping. For example, in the municipality of Tsembéhou, we observed during our interviews with farmers that cassava is grown in association with ambrevades, taro, maize and sweet potatoes. Food crops are also mixed with cash crops. In addition to the combination of crops, the use of archaic tools on the farms should be noted. Farmers still use pickaxes to work the land. The use of agriculture often in the slopes prevent the mechanization of agriculture. Cultivable areas are very small and it is rare to find a household with more than 2 ha of land. In fact, most farmers in Anjouan and in the study areas have a double activity in relation to their working time. It is rare to find a farmer who devotes only his or

her time to agriculture. This activity does not exclude any social category from practicing it in Comoros : city dwellers, villagers, civil servants, rich or poor. All of these people practice agriculture, but some do it for pleasure, others for necessity. Moreover, even if the Comorian population is really attached to this activity, many are those who are not interested. Among the causes, there is the theft of crops, the fall in prices of products, the prices of some local products which are not competitive enough compared to the prices imposed on other counterparts i.e. the competition of imported products, the laziness of some households due to the sending of funds by the diaspora, etc. These factors are among many others that hinder the development of agriculture in Anjouan and the study areas.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

In this article, two types of family farms were characterized in the study area : farmers and herders. These two groups are constrained by various factors that prevent the development of their activities. In fact, analyzing and conceiving of the agriculture practiced at a given time and place in terms of an agrarian system consists of breaking down the cultivated ecosystem and the productive social system into two main sub-systems, studying the organization and functioning of each of these sub-systems, and studying their interrelationships (Mazoyer et al 2003). On the other hand, other authors such as (cochet,2011) consider the characterization of the concept of agrarian system as a characteristic study of agriculture as a whole. Thus, the discussions in this article focus on the different constraints preventing agricultural development in the study area.

### **1. Factors limiting the development of the livestock system in Anjouan**

The livestock activity, especially cattle, is currently experiencing serious difficulties in its development. Overall, in the four communes studied, this activity is decreasing as the years go by. Food for livestock is becoming increasingly scarce, the labor required for feeding and the lack of fodder are obstacles that require solutions for the development of this activity. Theft of animals, one of the major problems mentioned by large numbers of farmers, should not be an obstacle to the development of this activity. Farmers throughout the

island of Anjouan should follow the example of farmers in the Niyoumakélé region in using manure for soil fertility. Agriculture-livestock integration can be seen as a peasant adaptation strategy as already suggested (Dufumier,2012) that the association of livestock and crops allows for soil replenishment and are also an ideal compost for what concerns peri-urban agriculture. Indeed, this integration allows farmers to diversify activities, reduce risks such as food insecurity and improve soil fertility (Barmo, et al ,2017). Several authors note that the quality of manure from livestock is good for crop development (Yuselys,2009). Thus, the development of this activity in Anjouan could allow farming households to increase their income, reduce the emigration of young people to other islands but also reduce meat imports to Anjouan. It would therefore be interesting to try to facilitate transactions, particularly for purchases in this activity, and to strengthen the guarding system for cattle theft.

## **2. From identifying to understanding constraints to farm development in Anjouan**

Several factors contribute to the slowing of farm development in Anjouan. The study shows that socio-political, cultural and economic factors are the main obstacles to farm development. Indeed, the agricultural policies put in place since independence by the various actors can be described as incoherent. The programs on which they are based do not seem to be suitable for the development so desired by the farmers. For example, in the case of the Union of Comoros in its 2014-2019 program, the government's actions are mainly focused on the popularization of fertilization techniques, agricultural intensification and support to small producers. However, this does not correspond to the reality observed in the field. In fact, the development strategies implemented in rural areas must be oriented towards an approach that makes the participation of populations in the construction of their territory a priority (Karima, 2014). The policies of favoritism and nepotism must not take precedence over collective interests in order to achieve a harmonious and sustainable development of farms. In relation to the socio-cultural factors, the youth constitute an enormous potential for development. For this reason, the inclusion of rural youth in development policies is essential to achieve the objectives of sustainable development not only for farms but also for the vast majority of the Comorian population,

which is predominantly young. Supporting youth in rural areas of Anjouan through agricultural training and mentoring will help stop youth out-migration and contribute to agricultural development in Anjouan. Rural youth represent the future in terms of food security and agricultural development (FAO, 2014). Indeed, for economic factors, agricultural households on the island of Anjouan, as in developing countries that produce cash crops, are subject to price variations, especially for cash crops. This variation is structural because it depends on international demand (RAKOTONDRABE, 2017). In Anjouan, producers do not set the price of their products ; prices are imposed by local collectors. In the case of vanilla, once producers have sold their produce, they do not receive the money in cash but often have to wait a few months up to 6 months or even a year, and sometimes they also receive the sum in half. It would be desirable, for example, in the case of ylang-ylang, where the Comoros occupy a very important place in the world, to strengthen the agricultural cooperatives and to work with them. The cooperatives could, in collaboration with certain institutions, buy the essential oils and sell them themselves abroad. For other products such as cloves and vanilla, state intervention must be remarkable to set a reasonable price and monitor its application to stabilize price fluctuations in these products.

### **3. Financing on agricultural activities**

Agriculture constitutes an important, if not major, part of the GDP of developing countries (FAO, 2006). A large portion of rural households' cash income comes from agricultural activities. Yet, the contribution of stakeholders to financing and intervention in the agricultural sector has remained limited. The supply of financial and technical services available to farm households is still largely limited. Stakeholders need to adopt new approaches and new modes of intervention to support farm households in their activities. In the interaction of actors, the State must appear as the main and decisive actor for the financing of agricultural activities. On the other hand, the interventions of other actors such as the various NGOs, financial institutions, and farmers' organizations should not only be neglected, but placed in second place. Pavel Turcan in an article on development actors and blocking actors in rural areas shows that community groupings at the grassroots level are privileged beneficiaries of aid



projects, but they cannot be reached on a large scale and aid projects cannot have a sustainable impact, if the government does not in fact show its will to pursue a development policy. Thus, farm development must be provided primarily by the state, and interventions by other actors must be behind the state to support development.

## **CONCLUSION**

In the Union of the Comoros, particularly in Anjouan where the majority of the population is poor and in rural areas, the development of agricultural activities must appear as an absolute necessity. Farm development has been marginalized since the country's independence in 1975. The majority of farmers in rural areas hardly benefit from the necessary support and interventions put in place by some development actors. The development actors, in particular the State, limit their actions to the level of the farmers and have a reduced vision of their respective missions, while the populations, in particular the young people in the rural areas, find themselves in increasingly difficult extreme situations. Fluctuating prices for cash crops at the national level, which sometimes depend on world prices, discourage farmers from becoming more involved in agricultural activities. Competition from food products coming from other countries neighboring Comoros is a major handicap for local farmers. Farmers' organizations are finding it difficult to organize themselves in order to gain an advantage in their farming activities, and a pauperization of the situation of farming households is becoming increasingly noticeable in rural areas. This study calls on the government, as the main actor in the development of the island of Anjouan, to act in a very remarkable way in the development of farms. It is the main actor of development in the country and in the rural areas. The most serious obstacle is the reluctant attitude of those in power in the state towards development. The development of farmers' associations on a national scale requires the help and support of the government.

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