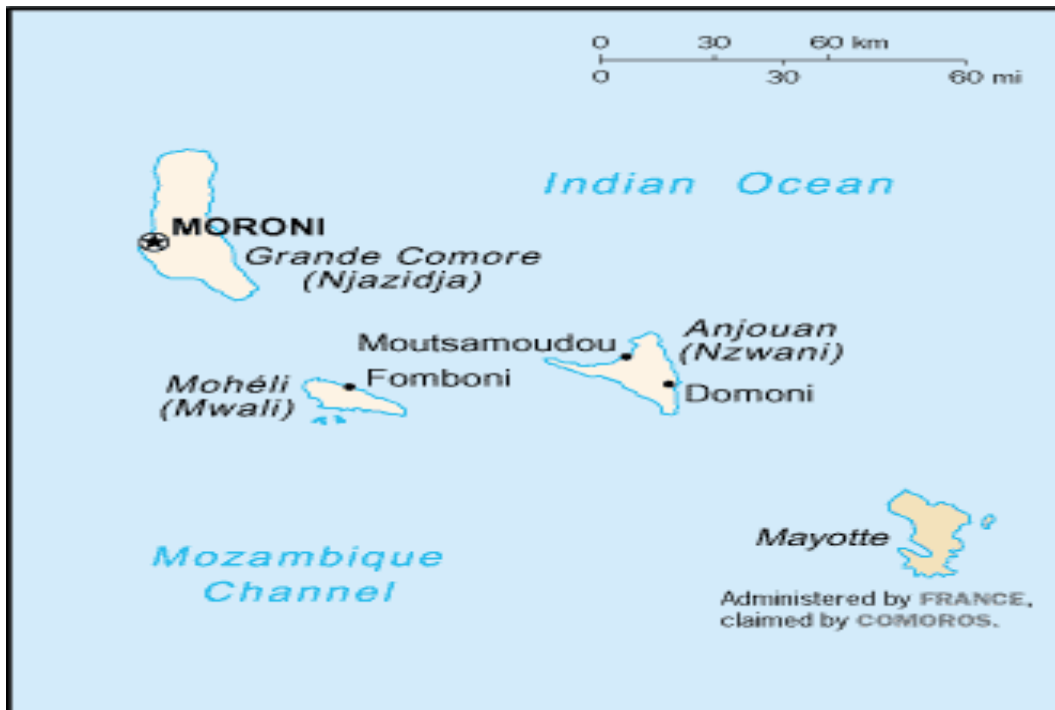


## Comoros



### **Background:**

Unstable Comoros has endured 19 coups or attempted coups since gaining independence from France in 1975. In 1997, the islands of Anjouan and Mohéli declared their independence from Comoros. In 1999, military chief Col. AZALI seized power. He pledged to resolve the secessionist crisis through a confederal arrangement named the 2000 Fomboni Accord. In December 2001, voters approved a new constitution and presidential elections took place in the spring of 2002. Each island in the archipelago elected its own president and a new union president was sworn in on 26 May 2002.

### **Geography Comoros**

#### **Location:**

Southern Africa, group of islands at the northern mouth of the Mozambique Channel, about two-thirds of the way between northern Madagascar and northern Mozambique

#### **Area:**

*total:* 2,170 sq km

*land:* 2,170 sq km

*water:* 0 sq km

#### **Coastline:**

340 km

#### **Climate:**

tropical marine; rainy season (November to May)

#### **Terrain:**

volcanic islands, interiors vary from steep mountains to low hills

**Natural resources:**

NEGL

**Environment - current issues:**

soil degradation and erosion results from crop cultivation on slopes without proper terracing; deforestation

**People Comoros****Population:**

671,247 (July 2005 est.)

e 9,407/female 10,561) (2005 est.)

**Population growth rate:**

2.91% (2005 est.)

**Net migration rate:**

0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2005 est.)

**Languages:**

Arabic (official), French (official), Shikomoro (a blend of Swahili and Arabic)

**Country name:**

*conventional long form:* Union of the Comoros

**Government type:**

independent republic

**Capital:**

Moroni

**Independence:**

6 July 1975 (from France)

**Legal system:**

French and Sharia (Islamic) law in a new consolidated code

**Executive branch:**

*chief of state:* President AZALI Assoumani

**International organization participation:**

ACCT, ACP, AfDB, AMF, AU, FAO, FZ, G-77, IBRD, ICAO, ICt (signatory), ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS (observer), ILO, IMF, IMO, InOC, Interpol, IOC, ITU, LAS, NAM, OIC, OPCW (signatory), UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WCO, WHO, WMO

**Economy - overview:**

One of the world's poorest countries, Comoros is made up of three islands that have inadequate transportation links, a young and rapidly increasing population, and few natural resources. The low educational level of the labor force contributes to a subsistence level of economic activity, high unemployment, and a heavy dependence on foreign grants and technical assistance. Agriculture, including fishing, hunting, and forestry, contributes 40% to GDP, employs 80% of the labor force, and provides most of the exports. The country is not self-sufficient in food production; rice, the main staple, accounts for the bulk of imports. The government - which is hampered by internal political disputes - is struggling to upgrade education and technical training, privatize commercial and industrial enterprises, improve health services, diversify exports, promote tourism, and reduce the high population growth rate. Increased foreign support is essential if the goal of 4% annual GDP growth is to be met. Remittances from 150,000 Comorans abroad help supplement GDP.

**GDP:**

purchasing power parity - \$441 million (2002 est.)

**GDP - real growth rate:**

2% (2002 est.)

**GDP - per capita:**

purchasing power parity - \$700 (2002 est.)

**GDP - composition by sector:**

*agriculture:* 40%

*industry:* 4%

*services:* 56% (2001 est.)

**Population below poverty line:**

60% (2002 est.)

**Inflation rate (consumer prices):**

3.5% (2001 est.)

**Labor force:**

144,500 (1996 est.)

**Unemployment rate:**

20% (1996 est.)

**Budget:**

*revenues:* \$27.6 million

*expenditures:* NA, including capital expenditures of NA (2001 est.)

**Agriculture - products:**

vanilla, cloves, perfume essences, copra, coconuts, bananas, cassava (tapioca)

**Industries:**

tourism, perfume distillation

**Oil - production:**

0 bbl/day (2001 est.)

**Oil - consumption:**

700 bbl/day (2001 est.)

**Exports:**

\$28 million f.o.b. (2002 est.)

**Exports - commodities:**

vanilla, ylang-ylang, cloves, perfume oil, copra

**Exports - partners:**

US 42.2%, France 18%, Singapore 16%, Turkey 4.7% (2004)

**Imports:**

\$88 million f.o.b. (2002 est.)

**Imports - commodities:**

rice and other foodstuffs, consumer goods; petroleum products, cement, transport equipment

**Imports - partners:**

France 24.4%, South Africa 11.5%, UAE 7.3%, Kenya 6.1%, Italy 5.1%, Mauritius 4.8%, Singapore 4.2% (2004)

**Currency:**

Comoran franc (KMF)

**Exchange rates:**

Comoran francs (KMF) per US dollar - 396.21 (2004), 435.9 (2003), 522.74 (2002), 549.78 (2001), 533.98 (2000)

*note:* the Comoran franc is pegged to the euro at a rate of 491.9677 Comoran francs per euro

**Highways:**

*total:* 880 km

*paved:* 673 km

*unpaved:* 207 km (1999 est)

**Ports and harbors:**

Fomboni, Moroni, Moutsamoudou

**Merchant marine:**

*total:* 79 ships (1,000 GRT or over) 452,801 GRT/681,343 DWT

*by type:* bulk carrier 9, cargo 55, chemical tanker 1, container 1, livestock carrier 1, passenger/cargo 1, petroleum tanker 5, refrigerated cargo 5, roll on/roll off 1

*foreign-owned:* 35 (Bulgaria 1, Germany 1, Greece 7, India 1, Jordan 1, Kenya 1, Lebanon 3, Nigeria 1, Norway 1, Pakistan 1, Philippines 1, Russia 2, Syria 3, Turkey 6, Ukraine 4, United Kingdom 1) (2005)

**Airports:** 4