

# Comoros

Total population (July 2000 estimate): 578,000

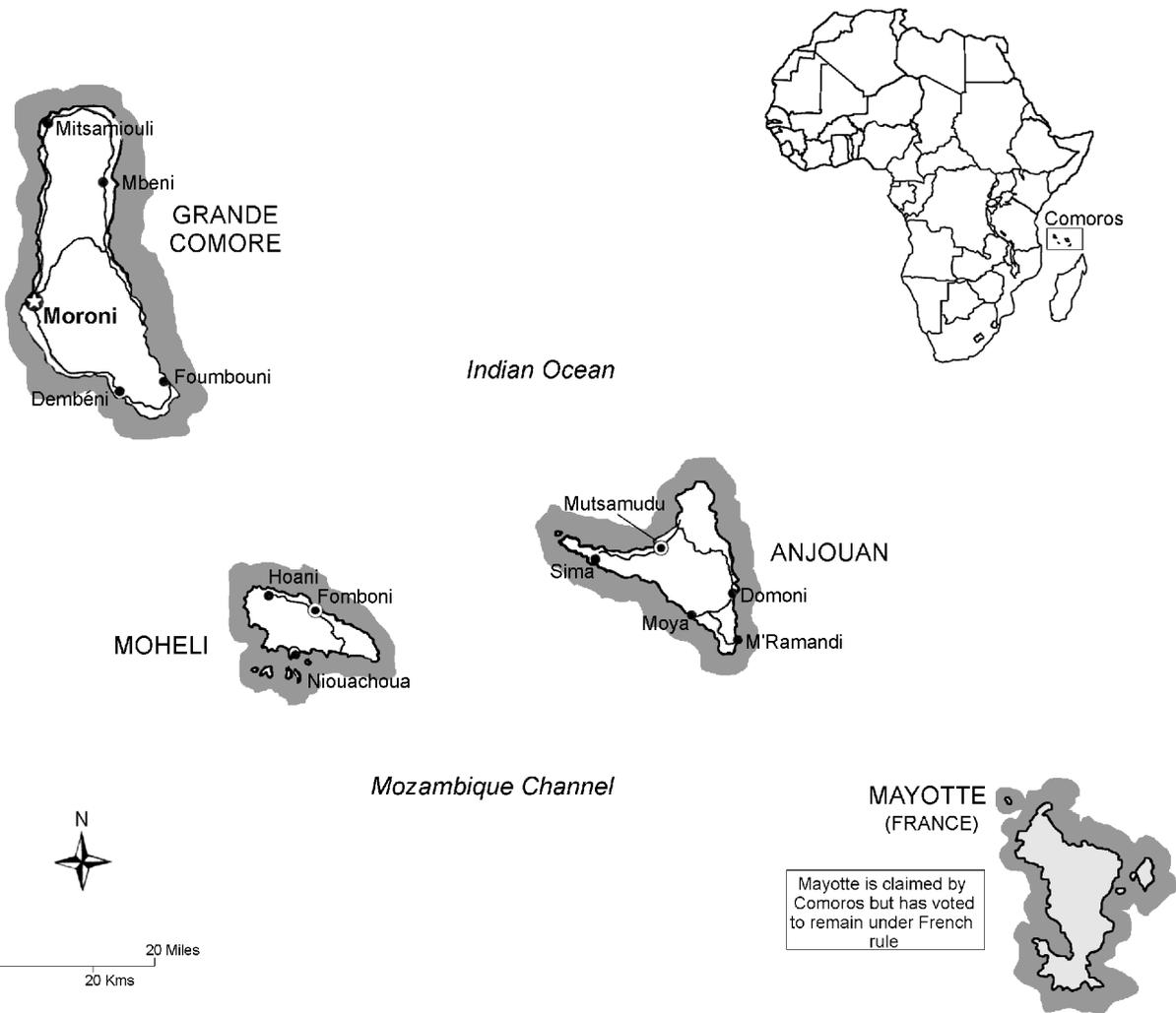
Area: 2,170 km<sup>2</sup>

Annual population growth rate (2000): 3.05%

Life expectancy at birth (1998): 59.2 years

People not expected to survive to age 40 (1998): 20.1% of total population

GDP per capita (1998): US \$1,398



The Comoro Archipelago consists of a number of islands located at the northern end of the Mozambique Channel in the Indian Ocean. The islands of Grand Comore, Moheli and Anjouan make up the State of The Comoros. The island of Mayotte is under French administration. The Comoros are densely populated, and more than 80% of the population of about 580,000 obtain their livelihood from agriculture. The agricultural sector accounts for approximately 40% of the GDP with the main food crops being bananas, cassava, sweet potatoes, rice and maize. Almost all of Comoros' export earnings are derived from the sale of agricultural products such as vanilla, essence of ylang-ylang (an aromatic oil derived from a flowering tree), copra and cloves.

Intensive farming practices, combined with heavy population pressure and uncontrolled deforestation have caused serious soil erosion on the Comoro islands.

The mineral industry of the Comoros is limited to the production of local building materials, mainly of volcanic rocks.

### **Geological outline**

The Comoros are made up of volcanic rocks, primarily undersaturated alkali olivine basalts. Phonolitic and small volumes of trachytic lavas have also been reported (Pavlovsky and de Saint-Ours 1953; Flower 1973; Emerick and Duncan 1982). The volcanic rocks have been differentiated into the 'Phase volcanique supérieure, intermédiaire et inférieure.' In all phases, basaltic lavas prevail. Scorias and puzzolanitic tuffs have been reported from Grand Comore, Moheli and Anjouan. Phonolitic and trachytic rocks occur on Mayotte (Pavlovsky and de Saint-Ours 1953). The age of the volcanics increases eastward (Hajash and Armstrong 1972), from Grand Comoros ( $0.01 \pm 0.01$  million years) to Anjouan ( $1.52 \pm 0.1$  million years) to Mayotte ( $3.65 \pm 0.1$  million years) indicating that the volcanic chain of the Comoros represents a 'hot spot trace' that was produced as the Somali plate moved over a mantle source (Emerick and Duncan 1982).

### **Agromineral potential**

The potential of agromineral development on the Comoros is very limited due to the lack of suitable agrogeological resources.

### *References:*

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- Flower MFJ 1973. Evolution of basaltic and differentiated lavas from Anjouan, Comores Archipelago. *Contrib. Mineral. Petrol.* 38: 237-260.
- Hajash A and RL Armstrong 1972. Paleomagnetic and radiometric evidence for the ages of the Comores Island, west central Indian Ocean, *Earth Planet. Sci. Lett.* 16:231.
- Pavlovsky R and J de Saint-Ours 1953. *Etude Géologique de l'Archipelago des Comores.* Service Géologique, Tananarive, Madagascar, 55pp.