

## **Chapter 7.**

# **MACROECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT AND GOVERNMENT HEALTH POLICY IN GUINEA**

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### **Introduction**

Guinea's per capita income in 1989 was estimated to be US\$ 450, which placed the country in the upper tier of low-income countries. Health indicators reflected a substandard level of welfare that is typical for the poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa: life expectancy at birth was 43 years, infant mortality was 140.9 per 1000 and mortality among children under five was 248 per 1000. In spite of this bleak picture, the agricultural and mineral resources of Guinea make it one of Africa's more richly endowed countries. The tapping of this economic potential and its effective use for overall socioeconomic development, including the improvement of health, is a serious challenge for the Guinean authorities. The resources of the health sector as such could also be enhanced significantly by growth of the Guinean economy.

The Guinean Government has been relatively active in extending its primary health care services, and it is launching a new reform of hospital services. These policies constitute an essential ingredient of its efforts for improving the health of the Guinean population; however, they can be developed only within the context of the economic situation in Guinea. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the feasible level of government health expenditure and the financial implications of health policies against the current macroeconomic background.

The outline of this study is as follows. First, the current macroeconomic situation of Guinea is presented.<sup>1</sup> In the second part of the study, the characteristics