

REPUBLIC OF NIGER

MESSAGE OF THE REPUBLIC OF NIGER FOR THE U.S. – AFRICA SUMMIT WASHINGTON 5-6 AOUT 2014

Niger is pleased to participate in the First U.S.-Africa Summit under the theme with a strong symbol entitled " Investing in future generations."

The people of Niger takes this opportunity to express its gratitude to the great American people and its admiration to President Barack Obama for having kept the promise he made on the occasion of his trip to Africa from June 26 to July 3, 2013, to gather around him in Washington, African leaders.

Country of freedoms and human rights, the United States is also the land of opportunity and prosperity. The United States is also par excellence the land of diversity and intermixing of people, firmly attached to a democracy built on strong institutions.

It is to this America of tolerance and solidarity to which Niger, through the voice of its President, Issoufou Mahamadou, addresses its deep appreciation for the quality of its commitment to cooperation and for its determination to strengthen the excellent relations between our two countries.

Be it on development issues, support for the promotion of democracy and human rights, or on security matters, the Government of the United States is a committed and effective partner in maintaining cooperation with Niger.

We fervently want this partnership to continue and to be strengthened because it supports the priority choices made by Niger since April 2011.

The priorities that President Issoufou Mahamadou has undertaken since assuming office are to build a Niger of democracy, peace, stability, justice and prosperity. These commitments are resolutely pursued through the implementation of the Renaissance Program, based on which Nigeriens have freely and massively voted for the candidate Mahamadou Issoufou.

The program is structured around the following eight (08) priorities:

- 1) Building strong, credible and sustainable democratic institutions;
- 2) Ensuring the safety of people and goods throughout the national territory;
- 3) Promoting agriculture and animal husbandry through the implementation of the 3N Initiative, " Nigeriens Nourish Nigeriens;"
- 4) Promoting access to water and sanitation for all, through the development of urban, rural and pastoral water facilities;
- 5) Ensuring infrastructure and energy development;
- 6) Promoting health;
- 7) Promoting education and vocational training;
- 8) Creating jobs, especially for young people.

With particular regard to youth empowerment, President Issoufou Mahamadou's engagement through the Renaissance Program aims to create 50,000 jobs annually over the term of his mandate. The Nigerien authorities' ambition is also to raise the rate of vocational training in education to 25%.

In this regard, Niger welcomes the three major programs of President Obama:

- The first, Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), launched in 2010 which aims to promote young people's leadership skills, and
- The second, which aims to promote African women's entrepreneurship in order to reduce gender-based inequalities (WAEP); and
- The third, Feed the Future, is a flagship program of President Obama, which addresses the highly vital issue of food security. Niger is pleased that this program falls in line with President Issoufou Mahamadou's 3N Initiative as the two strategies are designed to break the cycle of famines that impede grassroots development and hinder economic growth. In fact, these twin initiatives have the same strong message: Our generation can eliminate poverty and, in particular, its most degrading aspect - hunger.

These programs will promote the growth and prosperity of nations.

They will also strengthen democratic governance as well as peace and security to which Niger's current authorities are particularly attached.

Niger is also convinced that its development and its capacity to make its products competitive in order to participate in international trade are strongly linked with the country's ability to access economic and energy infrastructure.

As for economic infrastructure, the country aims to develop irrigation, strengthen pastoral water points, create modern slaughterhouses, improve its road network and promote the railway for its international opening in order to connect the main production areas to various markets.

Accordingly, Niger has high expectations of the projects being developed in the context of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), in order to accompany the country in this ambition.

In the field of energy, the country is committed to undertake the electrification of urban and rural areas and to develop its significant water, mineral or renewable energy potential.

We welcome President Obama's decision to have launched in 2013, the Initiative for Energy in Africa, which aims to help more than 600 million Africans to access electricity but also to strengthen the industrial and economic capacities of the continent.

Niger needs to promote both its industrial capacities and the human resources necessary in order to achieve this initiative. Niger is also aware that investing in youth is a cardinal requirement.

Investing in youth means first and foremost the guarantee of a decent education. That is why Niger has decided to make this sector a priority by allowing it a sizeable share of the national budget. The country's ambition is to achieve universal education, including girls' education, and to train elites well-adapted to the demands of both the private and the public sectors.

Investing in future generations means also to instill in young people a sense of patriotism and the values of peace, solidarity and tolerance which alone can enable them to build a world of stability and progress.

Niger, its people, and its leaders wish full success to the First U.S.-Africa Summit.

NIAMEY, July 5, 2014.