



**Republic of Niger**  
*Fraternity - Labour - Progress*  
**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**



**ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES**  
**(ECOWAS)**

***ECOWAS PARLIAMENT***

**NIGER COUNTRY REPORT**

**Composition of the Delegation**

- 1. Boukari Sani Malam Chaïbou***
- 2. Nassirou Halidou***
- 3. Sawani Karimou***
- 4. Halima Mamane***
- 5. Argi Dan Dadi***
- 6. Sani Ousmane***

*Second Ordinary Session, November 2019*

**Honourable Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament,  
Honourable Members,  
Ladies and gentlemen.**

On behalf of the delegation of Niger, I have the distinct honour to extend to you, my warm greetings and best wishes for good health and success during this 2019 Second Ordinary Session of our Parliament and the last ordinary session of our Legislature.

**Honourable Speaker, Moustapha Cissé Lo and dear colleagues,**

Before I begin, allow me to thank you on behalf of the highest authorities of Niger and the national representation for choosing our country to host the “Parliamentary Seminar on Migration in West Africa”.

**Dear colleagues,**

This report that I am presenting to you is structured according to the following outline:

**I/ Political, Social and Health Situation**

**II/ Security situation**

**III/ Status of Implementation of Community Texts**

**IV/ Status of Implementation of Infrastructure Programmes and Projects**

**V/ Economic and Financial Situation of Niger**

**VI/ Economic Prospects**

**Honourable Speaker,**

**Honourable Members,**

The delegation of Niger is presenting the same information as contained in the report submitted during the First Ordinary Session of May 2019. However, the delegation will engage you on the political, social, health and security situation.

## **I/ Political, Social and Health Situation**

### **a) Political situation:**

Despite the difficult security context, the political environment is characterised by the activities of all political parties, irrespective of their views. In terms of foreign policy, activities included the organisation of the African Union (AU) Summit in July 2019 in Niamey, the election of Niger at the security council, the appointment of the President as the Chairman of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS and the holding of the Extraordinary Summit of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government.

- **At National Level**

At national level, the political situation is dominated by the voter registration exercise launched by the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) on 15 October 2019 to compile the biometric electoral register. As indicated above, this exercise largely accounts for the mobilisation and sensitisation on the ground by various political actors fifteen months before the elections.

However, in view of the delay in the process, the “Alliance for the Republic” (APR), a coalition of political parties supporting the President’s political agenda, addressed a request to the **Prime Minister, who is at the same time the Chairman of the National Council for Political Dialogue (CNDP)**, to convene the Council in order to assess the activities of the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI), especially the effective implementation of its timeline.

The meeting held on 10 October 2019 with the participation of the Chairman of the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI), focused on three keys issues, namely **mobile court hearings, biometric voter registration and challenges.**

- **Mobile Court Hearings:**

The Chairman of the National Independent Electoral Commission specified that the mobile court hearings came as a response to the gap in the national identification system, but at the same time as a means to enable the vast majority of Nigeriens to acquire ID cards in accordance with the law requiring all citizens aged 15 and above to acquire ID cards.

- **Biometric Voter Registration**

Currently, the biometric registration concerns four regions, namely Agadez in the north, Tahoua at the centre, Tillabéry and Dosso in the west. In his address to the members of the CNDP, the Chairman of the National Independent Electoral Commission indicated that the commission could not kick off this exercise on 1 October due to the delay in the supply of tablets by the technical operator Genalto and the deficiencies identified in the software installed on these tablets. This deficiency disrupted the registration calendar put in place by the commission, hence the need to postpone the start of the exercise to 15 October 2019.

- **Challenges:**

The Chairman of the National Independent Electoral Commission highlighted the challenges confronting his institution. He indicated that the roll-out of the electoral process is faced with internal and external challenges. As regards internal challenges, he mentioned that the commission is still a young institution, which needs to improve its performance in terms of expertise and meet the standards of a modern administration. External challenges have to do with the delay in the supply of some materials and the fact that a large number of registration officers withdrew from the process after being selected and trained for biometric registration. On another note, the meeting of the National Council for Political Dialogue (CNDP) focused on government's proposal to increase women's quota from 15 to 25% for elective positions and from 25 to 30% for appointive positions. According to an assessment by the Minister for Women's Promotion on the implementation of the quota act, little progress has been made in view of the high proportion of women, 50.85%, as compared with the total population. However, a bill on the upward adjustment of the quota has been submitted to the National Assembly for adoption.

Besides, it should be recalled that the 2020-2021 timeline is for municipal, regional, legislative and presidential elections. Hence, stakes are high because these elections are expected to mark the first democratic change of power in our country. The President, His Excellency ISSOUFOU MAHAMADOU, solemnly declared that in accordance with Article 47 of the constitution of 25 November 2010, he will pass on the baton to the President to be willingly elected by Nigeriens in April 2021. In line with this

commitment, he instructed the Prime Minister to initiate a constructive and inclusive dialogue with all socio-political actors for a peaceful political climate to prevail. As a result, the opposition, which boycotted the meetings of the National Council for Political Dialogue for two years, came on board on 20 October 2019, which was a watershed welcomed by the Minister. To ensure that future timelines are set in mutual trust, and on account of the worrying security situation, the consultation initiated by the Prime Minister decided that the group of stakeholders consist of thirty-eight (38) members, including ten (10) representatives from the majority party, ten (10) from the opposition, ten (10) from non-affiliated parties, five (5) from representative trade unions, three (3) civil society representatives.

The group is also to include three (3) important witnesses, namely the Traditional Leaders Association, the Islamic Association of Niger, the Catholic Church, a representative from the United Nations system, the European Union and the National Democratic Institute (NDI).

Finally, the committee is given a month to address the various issues, in particular the timeline, and present a report within the prescribed deadline.

- **On foreign policy, our country has achieved tremendous success at regional, sub-regional and international levels.**

At regional level, Niger organised the Extraordinary Summit of African Union Heads of State and Government from 7 to 8 July 2019 in Niamey. It should be recalled that His Excellency ISSOUFOU Mahamadou was appointed in January 2017 in Addis Ababa to champion the **Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA)** upon his nomination by Professor Alfa Conde, who was the then Chairman of the African Union. Thanks to the commitment of His Excellency ISSOUFOU MAHAMADOU, a spectacular progress was made, to the extent that 54 countries out of 55 have signed the agreement. It has also been ratified by twenty-seven (27) out of 55 countries.

The opening ceremony took place on 7 July 2019. In his address, the current Chairman of the African Union stated that this Extraordinary Summit came to crown the efforts of the continental organisation, which culminated in that landmark event. The Chairman of the Commission, Moussa Mahamat FAKI, indicated that **the launching of this operational phase of the African CFTA was the fulfilment of an old dream of the entire continent.**

In the light of the foregoing, the Niamey Summit, which was attended by 4,500 delegates and guests, including 32 Heads of State and more than 100 ministers, is a milestone in the economic integration of African Union Member Countries. In his statement, President ISSOUFOU MAHAMADOU stated that the entry into force of the CFTA is the most important event in the **life of our continent since the establishment of the OAU in 1963 and its transformation into African Union.**

Several parallel events took place on the sidelines of the Niamey Summit, notably the coordination meeting of regional economic organisations and the African First Ladies Forum.

The 2019 Summit of the African Union held in Niamey ended on a note of general satisfaction. Member countries were urged to implement the free movement directive on the continental free trade area.

At sub-regional level, the President, His Excellency ISSOUFOU MAHAMADOU, was appointed the Chairman of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS. In his remarks to close the meeting, the new Chairman recalled that the deadline for the realisation of Vision 2020 adopted by our countries in 2007 to move from an ECOWAS of States to an ECOWAS of peoples is at hand. However, in view of the many challenges associated with the achievement of this goal, he resolved to make significant progress in at least three areas, notably: regional security, consolidation of democratic institutions and economic integration of ECOWAS Member States. In this vein, President ISSOUFOU MAHAMADOU urged his counterparts to work individually to contribute to the continental agenda to achieve by 2063, an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa led by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force on the international stage. Additionally, Niger hosted on Friday, 8 November 2019 an Extraordinary Summit of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS. This summit focused on the political situation in Guinea-Bissau following the appointment of a new Prime Minister.

At international level, Niger was elected a permanent member of the security council during the 88th Plenary Assembly of 7 January 2019 in New York (USA). Therefore, Niger will carry out this mandate for the 2020-2021 period on behalf of the African region. The return of our country to the Security Council is evidence of the **solid offensive diplomacy pursued by the President on various sub-regional, regional and international issues.**

- As regards parliamentary activities, the National Assembly of Niger hosted two important meetings, namely the regional conference on Parliaments' commitment to the **fight against terrorism and enabling conditions for terrorism in the Sahel, held on 12 June 2019** and the **seminar on parliamentary oversight of security services and parliamentary monitoring of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in the Sahel, organised by la Francophonie and the APF from 19 to 20 June 2019.**

At the end of those various meetings, important recommendations were made, notably the need for Parliamentarian to demonstrate firm commitment in supporting the countries to fight against terrorism both in the Sahel and in the world.

Besides, the National Assembly of Niger began the 2019 Second Ordinary Session, known as the budget session, on 25 September for a period of three (3) months **in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly.**

#### b) Social Situation

On the social front, the 3rd and 4th quarters of 2019 recorded two major developments, namely flooding and the situation of refugees.

- **Flooding**

The heavy rains recorded in August and September 2019 caused serious floods in several regions of the country. The following casualties were reported by the ministry in charge of disaster management as at 10 September 2019.

**16,093 households affected; 132,528 persons affected; 57 people dead; 12, 241 houses collapsed and 851 animals unaccounted for.**

This unfortunate situation was exacerbated by the shift of the Komadougou Yobé riverbed to the Diffa region, leading to the destruction of vegetable crops and houses in neighbouring villages. In addition to the security problem, the Diffa region is grappling with food insecurity. This situation has led Parliamentarians in the region to issue a public declaration, calling for prompt actions from the government, given the seriousness of the situation.

This call was heeded by the President who devoted the day of 9 November 2019 to visit the Diffa region. His Excellency ISSOUFOU

MAHAMADOU visited not only defence and security forces who are ensuring the security of our borders day and night, but also flood victims.

By way of support, the President informed the people of Diffa that development projects will resume, the cost of which is estimated at more than fifty (50) billion CFA Francs.

c) Situation of Refugees:

Niger, a country bordered by Burkina Faso and Mali in the west and Nigeria and Chad in south-east, is witnessing new movements at its borders.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that close to 442,449 asylum seekers, refugees, returned migrants and internally displaced persons were received in Niger as at 20 October 2019.

The massive influx of refugees is imputable to the growing insecurity in the various border areas, especially in southern Niger (Maradi region), where more than 40,000 Nigerians have settled. The Agadez region, for its part, has received 2091 asylum seekers from Libya. The situation at national level can be presented as follows: **56,815 Malian refugees; 2,190 Burkinabe; 78,040 internally displaced in the Tahoua and Tillabéry regions. 119,541 Nigerian refugees and 29,954 returned Nigeriens in the Diffa region, where 109,404 asylum seekers have settled.**

In the light of the foregoing, the humanitarian situation is likely to worsen further in these various regions.

d) Health Situation

During a session with the Minister for Public Health on Saturday, 26 October 2019, during which various issues were raised, he indicated in his presentation that the health situation is relatively calm in the entire country. Discussions focused on the need to improve patient care in major hospitals, namely the general referral hospital of Niamey, the general referral hospital of Maradi, national and district hospitals. In response to these concerns, the Minister pledged, on behalf of the government, to provide appropriate remedies.

## **II/ Security Situation at National Level**

Despite the significant resources deployed by the government of Niger, and the determination of our defence and security forces, the country continues to grapple with terrorist threats and organised crime.



The situation in Libya, Mali and Nigeria, where there are terrorist organisations, in particular the Islamic State, AQMI and the Boko Haram sect, is a major concern for our country.

Determined to combat faithless and lawless groups, the government has carried out the following actions as part of its programme termed “*Programme de Renaissance Acte II*”.

It has:

- Placed special emphasis on the link between security, democracy and development;
- Supported victims of humanitarian crises;
- Carried out massive recruitment in the various units of defence and security forces in sensitive areas;
- Organised joint regional and departmental patrols with close to 800 vehicles that are on the move day and night;
- Organised heavy operations with defence and security forces of member countries of G5 Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin;

Notwithstanding episodic attacks in insecurity zones, these laudable and unshakable actions by the President, have led to relative calm in the entire country.

### **III- Status of Implementation of Community Texts**

To demonstrate its commitment to the realisation of an integrated Commitment space, Niger has ratified all Protocols and Conventions of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as at 31 October 2018.

#### **a) Payment of of the Community Levy**

Like some countries in the Community, Niger has implemented the ECOWAS Community Levy. Hence, as at 31 December 2018, under the Community Levy, Niger has paid **5,053,337,827** out of **5,070,227,577** projected, representing a gap of **16,889,750**.

#### **b) Free Movement of Persons and Goods**

Despite efforts by successive governments, Community citizens still face serious impediments when crossing borders, and are subjected to illegal payments.

This practice, which is common to all Member States, deserves continued attention from Members of the Community Parliament. Therefore, to ensure the enforcement of the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons and Goods, Niger encourages Parliament to continue and prioritise unannounced visits to the borders of Member States of the Community.

#### **IV/ Status of Implementation of Infrastructure Programmes and Projects**

The implementation of the President's programme known as "*Programme de Renaissance Acte I*" has led to the roll-out of urban, road, airport, energy and inland water infrastructure over the past five (5) years.

These development projects have continued under the 2016-2021 *Programme de Renaissance Acte II*. Hence, the following infrastructure projects are underway.

##### **a) Urban Infrastructure:**

The programme is on-going with the roll-out of major infrastructure projects both in Niamey and in regional capitals. As part of the reconstruction of major roads in the capital, three interchanges were built from 2012 to 2018. Mention can also be made of the construction of the third bridge of Niamey, expected to be completed in 2020. Furthermore, thanks to the African Union summit held in July 2019, modern infrastructure has been built, notably a presidential hotel at the cost of forty billion (40,000,000,000) CFA Francs, a conference centre funded by the Republic of India, the repair and asphaltting of the Niamey express road, phase I over 9 km as well as the repair, asphaltting and rehabilitation of main roads in Niamey over about 65 km.

Individual regions are witnessing significant transformations with the rotating holding of the celebration of the Republic Day on 18 December.. Each year, the host region receives on average 50 billion for urban Infrastructure development. This year, the 2019 Republic Day celebration will be hosted by the Region du Fleuve (Tilabéry) in the western part of the country.

b) Road, Rail and Inland Water Infrastructure:

As regards road, rail and inland Water infrastructure, the government aims to:

- Pursue the construction of national and international networks;
- Sustain, preserve and maintain national road infrastructure;
- Develop rural track networks by adding on 2,700 km;
- Improve various roads and networks in urban centres;
- Diversify and strengthen infrastructure for crossing the Niger river (construction of a bridge in Farié, 65 km from Niamey at the cost of 1.3 billion)

Continue the construction of the Niamey-Cotonou railway loop.

c) Airport Infrastructure:

In respect of airport Infrastructure, challenges have been identified, having to do with their upgrading to security and safety standards.

In view of these major challenges, the government decided, under the Programme de la Renaissance Acte II, the rehabilitation of the Diori Hamani International Airport in Niamey, which was completed in June 2019 at the cost of one hundred and one billion CFA Francs and that of the Zinder Airport as part of the 18 December 2018 Republic Day celebration as well as the construction of an international airport in Tillabéry as part of the celebration of the 2019 Republic Day.

d) Energy Infrastructure

As part of the implementation of the Economic and Social Development Programme (PDES) for 2017-2021, Niger has put in place several projects to ensure sustainable power supply in the country, but also to increase access by the people of Niger to power through electrification. To realise all these actions, the government has set the goal to provide electricity to one thousand communities, to purchase fifteen thousand (15,000) multi-purpose solar street lights for villages and to disseminate 1,500,000 improved stoves, the funding of which has already been submitted to BOAD.

Hence, the following infrastructure projects have been completed or are underway:

- The one hundred and thirty (130) megawatts hydroelectric power plant of Kandadji expected to be completed in 2021;
- The expansion of the coal power plant of Tchirozérine (Agadez);
- The coal complex of SAKADAMNA Tahoua to be completed in 2023;
- The 7 MW solar power plant of Malbaza under construction with funding from India, expected to be completed in 2019;
- The 20MW solar power plant of Gorou Banda to be funded by the French Development Agency (AFD) in addition to the second diesel thermal component of 20MW;
- The gas thermal power plant in the Zinder region.

With the creation of these hydroelectric, thermal, renewable and coal - based power production facilities, the government intends to make Niger an energy exporting country..

## **VI Economic and Financial Situation**

Despite the particularly unfavorable international economic context, marked by the fall in commodity prices (uranium and oil) and the difficult sub regional security environment, Niger's economy grew by 6.5% in 2018 compared to 4.9% in 2017. This accelerated growth is attributable to the primary and tertiary sectors, which have benefited from an increase in public spending on irrigated crops under the 3N initiative, the good farming season and the structural projects for rural development supported by the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

Inflation has been below the Community standard of 3%, with a rate of 2.7% in 2018 compared to 2.4 in 2017. The moderate price sale and free distribution of foodstuffs undertaken by the government boosted this situation.

As for public finances, total receipts and expenditure increased respectively by 26.7% and 18.8% to reach 16.7% of GDP.

In summary, the overall fiscal balance, including grants, increased from 5.7 percent in 2017 to 4.1 percent in 2018.

Niger met three convergence criteria out of five in 2018, including inflation rate, the debt ratio and the wage bill ratio as a percentage of tax revenue.

The tax pressure rate and the overall fiscal balance including taxes as a percentage of GDP were not met for the year 2018.

For the year 2019, real GDP growth is expected at 6.3% and inflation would be 2.6%.

The public debt stock would rise from 48.9% of GDP in 2018 to 50.8% of GDP in 2019.

In the light of the above, in order to improve performance and consolidate the convergence process, the government has decided to pursue:

- Efforts aimed at preserving peace and strengthening security, which are a sine qua non for the implementation of the Renaissance Programme;
- Implementation of reforms aimed at enhancing tax revenue, notably broadening the tax base, tightening controls and minimising exemptions;
- Control of current expenditure, particularly the wage bill; and
- Improving on debt monitoring and ensuring prudent management.

## **VI / Economic Outlook**

The economic outlook is favourable for our country with a real GDP growth forecast of 6.3% in 2019 and 5.7% in 2020. Economic activity is expected to continue to benefit from good performance of the agricultural sector thanks to the expansion of irrigated land and the development of mini dams.

The 2017-2020 economic and social development plan envisages numerous infrastructure projects, especially the Cotonou - Niamey - Ouagadougou - Abidjan Railroad Loop, a crude oil export pipeline that was launched on 17 September 2019 by His Excellency Mr ISSOUFOU MAHAMADOU, President of the Republic, the rehabilitation of the irrigated perimeter of Birni N'Konni, the Kandagi hydroelectric joint project.

It should also be recalled that the resumption of activities with Nigeria should also be profitable for the economic prospects of Niger.

**Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members,**

Niger's delegation reiterates its thanks and hopes that a borderless community space will be realized in the near future, where people will have access to abundant resources in a viable and secure environment.

Thank you

Merci

Obrigado