



Pledging Conference  
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**Statement from the Government of Niger**

**Delivered by Mariama Elh Ibrahim, Minister of National Education, Literacy and the Promotion of National Languages**

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Technical and Financial Partners,

Speakers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor for me to address this august gathering to tell you about Niger's education program.

Niger, a Sahelian country located in West Africa, as of 2011 has an estimated population of 15 million inhabitants. Approximately 50 percent of the population is under 15 years of age and the school-age population has an annual growth rate of 3.3 percent. The illiteracy rate is 71 percent.

In 2003, in keeping with its Poverty Reduction Strategy and the commitments made at the international level, Niger developed a Ten-Year Education Development Program (PDDE 2003-2012). This program, developed around three components (Access, Quality, and Institutional Development), seeks to provide universal access to quality primary education and to halve the illiteracy rate by 2015. The implementation process for the Education Development Program has three phases, covering the periods: 2003-2007, 2008-2010, and 2010-2012.

The various implementation reports for this program have shown that, in terms of access, significant strides have been made. In fact, the gross enrolment rate increased from 41.7 percent in 2002 to 76 percent in 2011 (a 34.3 percentage point increase) and the enrolment of girls increased from 33 percent to 56 percent (a 23 percentage point increase) for the period.

Nevertheless, in terms of quality, there are still many challenges to be overcome. The primary school completion rate for 2011 is only 49 percent.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with a view to addressing the issue of quality, which is so critical, that Niger has embarked on a participatory process of developing a sectoral education and training program (PSEF 2012- 2020). This program takes into account the priorities and commitments of the first Government of the seventh Republic, which took office in April 2011. The Government has therefore made a commitment to substantially increase the allocation for education in the national budget from 18 percent in 2010 to 25 percent by 2016.

**Comment [SB1]:** Perhaps we could leave this section out for the speech.

In the basic education subsector, this commitment will be evident in the following budget allocations for the next few years:

- CFAF 167 billion in 2012;
- CFAF 184.5 billion in 2013; and
- CFAF 198.9 billion in 2014.

**Comment [SB2]:** This could be summarised ' Our budget will increase from 167bn CFA in 2012 to 198bn CFA in 2014 – showing the commitment of the Government.

Moreover, the Government plans to implement new policies to improve the quality of and access to basic education. This primarily entails the:

- Promotion strategy for community preschool facilities;
- National Policy for the Education and Training of Girls;
- National School-Feeding Strategy;
- Strategy for the Widespread Establishment of School Management Committees [*Comités de Gestion des Établissements Scolaires* COGES];
- Renewal of the basic education curriculum (primary, lower secondary, literacy and non-formal education);
- Introduction of national languages in teaching;
- Hiring of contract teachers in the public service;
- Extension of basic education to 10 years;
- National Textbook Policy; and
- Fast-Track Enrolment Strategy [*La Stratégie de Scolarisation Accélérée/Passerelle* (SSA/P)].

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The implementation of these policies will support, among others, the following activities:

- Mobilization of parents and elected officials to establish preschool facilities and have large-scale registration of children;
- Gradual support by the State for the payment of the wages of community educators;

**Comment [SB3]** : Perhaps the speech could refer to strategies and policies covering : early learning, girls education, feeding programmes in schools, management of finance for schools, curriculum, national language training etc. This list will be hard to translate. It would be better to say the purpose of each and avoid incorrect translation.

- Establishment of an operational legislative mechanism to counter all obstacles and handicaps to the formal education and training of girls;
- Establishment of an efficient and functional information and communication mechanism for a change of attitude toward the education of girls;
- Establishment of school-feeding programs in nomadic zones and places where schools are far from villages;
- Provision of dry rations for hard-working female students in rural areas with a low enrolment rate;
- Widespread establishment of COGES and COGES Federations (FCC);
- Inclusion of national languages because of their increased relevance to teaching and learning;
- Gradual hiring of contract teachers in the public service;
- Development of a career path for contract teachers;
- Training of contract teachers without any basic training;
- Removal of school-leaving examinations at the primary level;
- Provision of low-cost, high-quality manuals and guidebooks to students and teachers;
- Improvement of a textbook distribution system in formal and non-formal educational institutions; and
- Progressive dissemination of the FTI to the entire country.

The anticipated outcomes of these policies are an:

- Increase in the gross preschool enrolment rate from 4.5 percent in 2010 to 8.7 percent in 2014;

**Comment [SB4]** : Perhaps you could pull out 3 or 4 of the most important aspects to highlight to the audience.

- Increase in the gross primary school enrolment rate from 72.9 percent in 2010 to 81 percent in 2014;
- Increase in the gross primary school completion rate from 49 percent in 2010 to 60.6 percent in 2014;
- Increase in the pass rate for the Basic Education Certificate Examinations (BEPC) to 70 percent in 2014;
- Increase in the gross junior secondary school enrolment rate from 17.8 percent to 27 percent in 2014;
- Increase in the gross junior secondary school completion rate from 9.1 percent in 2010 to 16.7 percent in 2014;
- Increase in the proportion of staff in rural CEGs [secondary schools] to 50 percent of total staff in junior secondary schools in 2014;
- Increase in the proportion of literate adults from 29 percent in 2006 to 34 percent in 2014; and
- Admission of 105,676 unenrolled or out-of-school children aged 9 to 14 years into non-formal or formal learning centers.

**Comment [SB5] :** These will be important statistics to include in the published document, but concerned that they may lose their power if the translators get muddled.

With regard to staff, this program will therefore affect staffing after 2014: 105,749 children in pre-primary; 2,238,200 students in primary; and 390,827 students in junior secondary.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to conclude my presentation by saying that Niger is aware that the success of all these policy measures has certain prerequisites, including the promotion of good resource management. This is why the authorities, elected

barely six (6) months ago, campaigned on a platform of good governance and the elimination of corruption.

In addition, we are also aware that Niger alone cannot overcome the multiple challenges confronting education, literacy, and training. We are therefore making an appeal to donors for more technical and financial support.

Long live international cooperation!

Long live solidarity among people!

Thank you.