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Republic of Niger

Fraternity – Labor – Progress

INTERIM POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY PAPER

Prepared by the Niger Authorities

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ACRONYMS

PADEM	African Household Survey Program
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
EDSN	Niger Population and Health Survey
MICS	Multiple Indicator Survey
PCNLCP	National Framework Program to Combat Poverty
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
AfDB	African Development Bank
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
IEC	Information, Education, and Communication
CAFER	Autonomous Road Maintenance Financing Fund
OHADA	African Business Law Harmonization Project
SIGNER	Niger Geographical Information System
AGHRYMET	Regional Center for Agronomy, Hydrology, and Meteorology
ICRISAT	International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics

ACMAD	African Center of Meteorological Application for Development
CARE International	U.S. Nongovernmental Organization
DSCN	Statistics and National Accounts Directorate
DAEP	Economic Analysis and Forecasting Directorate
BUDNIG	Budget-Niger
UNEF	United Nations Equipment Fund

INTRODUCTION

1. Niger is a Sahelo-Saharan country covering 1,267,000 square kilometers, with a population of 10 million inhabitants, that suffers from serious natural disadvantages, particularly an increasingly arid climate, a high rate of population growth, and a lack of natural resources. Situated in the heart of the African continent, the country also suffers from being landlocked, which drives up the cost of imports and exports. The nearest ports are more than 1,000 km distant, and there is no interconnecting rail infrastructure. Moreover, the series of sociopolitical crises affecting the country since 1989, four Republics, a National Conference, two military regimes, and two coups d'état, compounded by two armed rebellions in the North and East of the country, have created a political and institutional instability which was not conducive to the implementation of measures to bring about economic rehabilitation and recovery. Thus, after more than 10 years of deteriorating production activities, public finances, and natural resources, and of shortcomings in the implementation of structural reforms and development programs, the problems associated with poverty have taken on increasing scope in both urban and rural areas. In recent years the human development index has ranked Niger toward the low end of the scale.
2. The results of the Household Consumer Budget Survey conducted in 1990 and 1993 in the context of the African Household Survey Program [Programme Africain d'Enquêtes auprès des Ménages] (PADEM) and the Population and Health Survey carried out in 1998 by CARE International/Niger highlighted the most serious aspects of poverty. At that time, two thirds of Niger's people were living below the poverty line, including one-third below the extreme poverty line; and the trend was worsening. As a whole, the population and health indicators elicited serious concerns. Faced with this situation, beginning in the mid-1990s the government undertook to make the strategy of sustainable human development and fighting poverty a central theme of its economic and social development policy. Consequently, in 1997 the authorities first drafted and then started to implement a large-scale National Framework Program to Combat Poverty [Programme Cadre National de Lutte contre la Pauvreté] (PNLCP) with the active participation of all the key development players (the public administration, the private sector, civil society, and donors). This program, formulated and validated through a participatory process, received the support of a significant number of countries and institutions present at the Donors Round Table held in Geneva in March 1998.
3. Despite the suspension of international aid to Niger in 1999, some encouraging signs were observed, particularly the establishment of four local offices responsible for program implementation.¹ Encouraged by these results, the government decided to

¹ The four local units are to support the establishment of the PNLCP within the framework of programs of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The African Development

take advantage of this experience in taking a participatory approach toward drafting its poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP), expected to be completed in late 2001. The present document, which constitutes an interim version of the PRSP, reaffirms the government's commitment to continue the process of drafting the final PRSP and make it the priority document for orienting its economic and social policy, sets out the proposed lines of strategic policy for the interim period, identifies the future steps to be taken, and outlines the participatory approach envisaged.

4. For Niger, 2000 will be a year full of hope following two successive years of adequate rainfall, the peace agreements signed in 1995, 1997, and 1998 with the rebel movements in the North and East of the country and sanctioned by the Flame of Peace celebrated in Agadez in September 2000, and with the legislative and presidential elections which gave rise to the institutions of the Vth Republic which have been in charge of the country since the start of the year.
5. In this climate, marked by the restoration of peace and the nurturing of democracy, Niger's development partners have undertaken to restructure and reorient their programs with a view to taking into account the poverty reduction component and to accompany it by a concerted strategy, a process expected to result in Niger's eligibility for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. This will make it possible to reduce the debt burden substantially and to allocate the counterpart funds under this facility to priority financing of agreed poverty reduction programs.

Bank (AfDB) has also established a unit, although unfortunately its operation is hampered because its funding has been suspended owing to arrears.

I. THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES

6. For several years now, Niger has been undertaking actions and measures aimed at limiting the effects of the worsening economic situation of poor households, in particular by establishing targeted job creation and professional retraining programs, an early warning system which makes it possible to monitor the food security situation, and support measures benefiting the most vulnerable population groups. Overall, the impacts of these efforts fell short of expectations. It must be acknowledged that these actions and measures were inefficient and were not designed as part of a comprehensive, coherent strategy involving the recipient groups in the expression of needs. In addition to these factors, there has been a chronic shortage of public funds owing to the central government's budgetary difficulties, the cessation of assistance from several development partners, and the country's political and institutional instability. Thus the economic and financial situation in Niger became precarious and the people's living standards deteriorated sharply. Now even more than in past years, reducing poverty is regarded as the major challenge to which the government has committed itself to respond. The first three National Reports on Human Development, published in 1997, 1999, and 2000, show the full seriousness of poverty in Niger. The situation continues to worsen unabated and its main victims are rural populations, particularly women and children. To tackle this problem, the government plans to take a more dynamic, more consensual approach within a participatory framework so that actions by the State, by public and private entities, by NGOs, by community associations, and by other development partners will be more effective. To reflect this commitment, in the immediate future, the government has decided to concentrate its intervention on improving the economic climate of the poor and on strengthening the basic social sectors, particularly in rural areas. To this end, and in keeping with the spirit of the 20/20 Initiative, public expenditure reviews have been carried out in the basic social sectors, especially in the health, education, and rural production sectors. The resulting recommendations are aimed at ensuring a more efficient allocation of resources, in particular of budgetary resources which have been extremely limited in recent years.
7. In addition, the government's future strategies will be based upon a proper understanding of the nature of poverty and its determining factors, and the recognition that poverty cannot be alleviated without strong, lasting, and widespread economic growth which is accompanied by the implementation of structural and sectoral policies focused on meeting the needs of the poor on a priority basis. That will require sound, prudent macroeconomic management and dynamic private investment consolidated by means of public investment efforts in the social sectors of education, health, jobs, and social protection for the poor and the marginalized.
8. Thus, the government, through its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), has committed itself to do its utmost to consolidate the efforts under way to create a stable macroeconomic environment, to continue, strengthen, and institute structural reforms, and to ensure peace and social stability in Niger, all these being key requirements for

economic growth. In this context, the Niger authorities will work with development partners to coordinate the various initiatives aimed at progressively eliminating poverty. The government, convinced that this approach represents the principal viable option for alleviating poverty quickly, is planning to take advantage of the preparation of the poverty reduction strategy paper in order to move forward on deepening the sectoral strategies and policies it implements and to make the necessary adjustments to the National Program to Combat Poverty. A permanent institutional structure put in place for this purpose will accord highest priority in its allocation of resources to the imperatives of reducing poverty. The national structure for coordinating overall and sectoral policies, to which the various sectoral and thematic steering mechanisms will be submitted, will have at its disposal a range of mechanisms for measuring, evaluating, and monitoring the poverty profile.

II. DESCRIPTION OF POVERTY

2.1 Niger at a glance

9. A landlocked country located in the heart of the Sahel, Niger is characterized by hostile climatic conditions, poor soil quality which continues to decline owing to desertification, intense population pressures (the rate of population growth has risen from 2.77 percent in 1970 to 3.3 percent in 1997), and poor social indicators. With a per capita GDP estimated at US\$269 in 1998, Niger is classified among the poorest countries. It is inhabited by almost 10 million people and has an extremely high fertility rate of about 7.5 children per woman of child-bearing age. The population is very unevenly distributed over the national territory, with three-fourths of all inhabitants residing south of the 16th parallel. Average population density is estimated at 6 inhabitants per square kilometer, with a sizable majority living in rural areas (84 percent) and a high rate of urban growth (on the order of 16 percent per annum). Life expectancy is 47.9 years (46.5 years for men and about 48.9 years for women). As indicated by the poverty profile carried out nationally, 63 percent of the population is poor. The ratio of poor females is 64 percent. In rural areas, the poor and extremely poor represent 66 percent and 36 percent of the population, respectively, while in urban areas the corresponding figures are 58 percent and 31 percent.
10. The increasing economic difficulties and the breakdown in the social fabric have led to an increase in violence within families, exploitation, poor treatment, and the abuse of women and children. The sociocultural situation is characterized by a high illiteracy level (the overall illiteracy rate was 17 percent in 1997, 12 percent for women and 22 percent for men) and low school enrollment ratios, with a great disparity between the ratios for girls and for boys. The gross overall enrollment ratio in primary school is 32.33 percent in 1998-1999, while the gross enrollment ratio for girls was 25.4 percent for the same period. The persistence for over two decades of high mortality rates for children under the age of 5 (the infant mortality rate registered 123 per thousand in 1997) constitutes one of the major concerns of the government and its development partners. The basic indicators for the drinking water sector show that, despite the efforts deployed since the 1980s, in particular with the establishment of 17,000 modern water supply points, the theoretical coverage rate for drinking water needs is 54 percent in rural areas and 60 percent in urban areas. The legal environment is unfavorable to children and women. It is aggravated by the increasing prominence of conservative religious forces and the dearth of information about rights. The results of the causal analysis carried out have been taken into account in this paper.

2.2 Understanding poverty; breadth of poverty

11. Poverty is a complex phenomenon. It is often reflected in the lack of sufficient income (monetary poverty) to cover the bare necessities of survival (food, drinking water, clothing, shelter), but also by the low capacity to satisfy needs in such areas as education, health, and access to basic infrastructure. Moreover, households'

perceptions of their poverty guide their behavior and sometimes belie statistical measurements. Measuring poverty, and analyzing its determining factors and evolution, requires data on households and communities. Unfortunately, Niger has not conducted any national surveys of households since 1993, and the analyses of monetary poverty set forth below date from that time. However, as regards the education and health indicators for the population, the results of the 1998 Niger Population and Health Survey (EDSN) provide more recent information. All the surveys conducted show that Niger is one of the poorest countries on the planet, regardless of the indicators selected: poverty is general, deep seated, and permanent. This suggests just how great a challenge it is to reduce poverty in Niger.

2.2.1 Monetary poverty

12. In Niger, the poverty line, this is the minimum amount required for an individual to be able to satisfy his basic needs, was reckoned in 1992 as CFAF 75,000 per person per year in urban areas and CFAF 50,000 in rural areas, with the thresholds for extreme poverty reckoned as CFAF 50,000 and CFAF 35,000, respectively. In consequence, nearly two-thirds (63.0 percent) of Niger's population falls below the poverty line, and just over one-third (34.0 percent) falls below the extreme poverty line. The impact of poverty is different depending on area of residence, gender, and socioprofessional category. Indeed, the incidence of poverty (the percentage of the population living below the poverty line) is 66 percent in rural areas and 52 percent in urban areas. Some 86 percent of the poor live in rural areas. An analysis of poverty by area of residence shows that 42 percent live below the poverty line in Niamey, while the figure is 58 percent for other urban centers, while in the Departments of Tillabéri, Dosso, and Maradi the proportion of the population living below the poverty line is 80 percent, 76 percent, and 65 percent, respectively. These three *departments* account for 18.7 percent, 14.5 percent, and 19.6 percent respectively of the country's total population, and yet are home to 23.7 percent, 17.3 percent, and 20 percent respectively of the country's poor. An examination of urban poverty by socioeconomic group reveals that the impact of poverty is greater among persons who are employed in the informal urban sector or are unemployed. Indeed, the poverty rate for individuals living in an urban household headed by a laborer or unskilled worker or self-employed vendor of services is estimated at 63 percent, while 57 percent of households headed by vendors of goods are estimated to be poor. In addition, households headed by persons working in the informal sector or agriculture account for 66 percent of urban poverty.
13. In rural areas, the households least affected by poverty are those headed by a wage earner, small merchant, or retired person. However, the total population of these groups is estimated at only 5 percent of the rural population. Farmers account for 88 percent of the rural population, and 68 percent of them are poor. The groups most affected by poverty in rural areas are households headed by a housewife or nonworking person. For these two groups, the incidence of poverty is 75 percent.

2.2.2 Determinants of poverty

14. There is a correlation found between the level of education and the degree of poverty, with the risk of poverty declining as the level of education rises. The incidence of poverty is 68 percent among those who have no schooling, 58 percent for those who have attended primary school, 42 percent for those who have attended secondary school, and 17 percent for those who have continued studies at a higher level. Household size and gender are other factors that increase the risk of poverty in both urban and rural areas. Women, particularly in rural areas, show higher rates of poverty than men.

2.2.3 Vulnerability

15. As distinguished from poverty, which is a static phenomenon, vulnerability is characterized by its dynamic nature. Vulnerability may therefore be defined by the high risk of becoming poor and the scant capacity to forestall this risk. The results of the various surveys conducted in Niger make it possible to identify a number of socioeconomic groups that may be regarded as vulnerable. This vulnerability may be associated with economic, social, or geographic factors. It may, therefore, derive from the precariousness of employment or from the whims of nature. When it is job-related, vulnerability affects primarily wage earners in the informal sector, the unemployed, women, and other non-employed persons.
16. In contrast, farmers and livestock raisers represent groups characterized by high rates of poverty for whom the risks associated with the whims of the climate are significant in a Sahelian country. Poverty is very widespread in rural areas, as indicated above. Moreover, the living standards of these groups are among the lowest in the country, as a result of which the slightest shock puts them in jeopardy.
17. The vulnerability of households headed by women may be explained, on the one hand, by the low level of schooling attained by them and, on the other hand, by the difficulties experienced by women seeking employment in a country where tradition is still a preponderant concern. Surveys have shown that households headed by a housewife, particularly in rural areas, are the poorest of all. The composition of this type of household exacerbates its vulnerability, inasmuch as it can count only on the incomes of its secondary members, if they are working, whereas other households have several income sources.
18. In addition, the results of the Multiple Indicator Survey (MICS) indicate that the level of women's' education is considerably below that of men. This gap will make households headed by women more vulnerable than those headed by men. Finally, when they are employed, they occupy the most precarious jobs.

2.2.4 Education

19. The MICS survey of 1996 indicates that the gross enrollment ratio is 32.2 percent for Niger as a whole. This ratio masks sizable disparities by area of residence and by gender. Indeed, the enrollment ratio is 74.8 percent in urban areas and only 23.9 percent in rural areas. In addition, 41 percent of boys receive schooling while the figure is only 23 percent for girls. It would appear, however, that the gaps between boys and girls have been narrowed in recent years, inasmuch as the gross enrollment ratio measured in 1999 is 37 percent for boys and 25.4 percent for girls. The situation as regards secondary education is even more of a concern. Indeed, only 1 percent of all students in the 1990s were registered in a secondary or vocational school, while the corresponding figure for the 1960s was 3 percent.
20. The MICS survey also shows that the rate of school leaving is very high in Niger, although it is lower in rural areas than in urban areas. On the other hand, it appears that girls leave school less frequently than do boys, regardless of their origins. Indeed, 60.8 percent of girls enrolled in the first grade continue through the fifth year, while the corresponding percentage for boys is only 52.1 percent.
21. Illiteracy affects 83 percent of the adult population. Indeed, the MICS survey indicates that fewer than 10 percent of parents are literate, regardless of the language used. Of course, the question was addressed only to parents in a household, while the definition of literacy generally applies to all persons over the age of 15. However, given the low school enrollment ratios in past years this rate may be regarded as a good approximation of the literacy rate. It also bears noting that the rate shows pronounced disparities by region and gender. In the case of French, for example, the language in which the literacy rate is the highest (6.5 percent of the population), the literacy rate is twice as high for men as for women (8.5 percent as against 4.6 percent) and urban populations are 6 times more literate than rural populations (24.7 percent as against 3.3 percent).

2.2.5 Health

22. The Niger Population and Health Survey (EDSN) of 1998 found that health coverage in Niger was 42 percent that year. Vaccination rates are quite low, with sizable disparities. The rate for children living in rural areas is significantly below that for children in urban areas. Some 47 percent of rural children, 7 percent of urban children, and 2 percent of children in Niamey have received no vaccinations. On the other hand, it would not appear that the sex of a child has any impact as regards vaccination, in that 18 percent of girls and 19 percent of boys have received all their vaccinations, while 40 percent of both groups have received none.
23. The same survey shows extremely high levels of infant mortality (274 per 1,000). In addition, 123 per 1,000 children will die before age 1 and 172 per 1,000 before age 5. Moreover, children in Niger suffer from malnutrition. The EDSN indicates that

41 percent are chronically malnourished while 20 percent are afflicted by severe chronic malnutrition. The nutritional situation is strongly affected by area of residence. Some 25 percent of the children living in Niamey show stunted growth and 8 percent suffer from severe chronic malnutrition, while these percentages are 43 percent and 21 percent in rural areas.

2.2.6 Fertility

24. Fertility levels in Niger are the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa. On average, a woman in Niger will have 7.5 children in the course of her life. In addition, adolescent fertility is high in Niger, probably owing to early marriage for various reasons. Such adolescents represent 23 percent of all women in their child-bearing years and account for 15 percent of all births.

2.2.7 Sexually transmitted diseases

25. AIDS awareness is generally high among the people of Niger, and 89 percent of men and 55 percent of women indicate that they know of or have heard of the disease. On the other hand, less than half of all women (48 percent) know that AIDS can be transmitted from mother to child, while 22 percent have no notion of this means of transmittal.
26. Despite the information campaigns carried out in Niger, women have a poor understanding of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Among women, 52 percent have no knowledge about STDs, as compared to 14 percent among men.
27. As regards the prevention of AIDS, condom usage still constitutes one of the best preventive measures. This is known by 83 percent of men and 79 percent of women. However, among women and men who are knowledgeable about AIDS and who have had sexual relations in the twelve months prior to the survey, only 3 percent of women and 14 percent of men have used this method at least once.
28. By end-1999, 6,500 people in Niger had died of AIDS, and the number of HIV-positive persons is estimated at 64,000, including 34,000 women ranging in age from 15 to 49 and 27,000 men. The prevalence of AIDS is 1.35 percent among youth aged 15 to 24. This rate is estimated at 1.73 percent among women and 1.14 percent among men. This means that Niger has the lowest prevalence of AIDS of all the countries of the region (Burkina Faso, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana).

2.2.8 Access to drinking water

29. The EDSN carried out in Niger in 1998 showed that only 4.9 percent of all Niger households have their own water source, a proportion that has not changed a lot since 1992 when the same survey indicated that 4.1 percent of households had an indoor water supply. However, this percentage masks sizable disparities. Indeed, while almost

no households in rural areas have their own water source (0.1 percent), 32.2 percent of Niamey households and 22.2 percent of other urban households do, though these percentages have not changed substantially since 1992 when the figures were 30.3 percent and 18.3 percent, respectively.

30. The majority of Niger households (56 percent) continue to draw their drinking water from public wells, particularly in rural areas where the figure is almost 68 percent. It is important to note that this percentage is in decline since 1992 in favor of drilled wells with pumps, which are much less problematical and have better hygienic conditions. Indeed, the percentage of households obtaining their water from drilled wells with pumps has increased from 2.8 percent in 1992 to 14.2 percent in 1998, while the percentage of households using a public well has declined from 74.5 percent in 1992 to 56 percent in 1998. Water vendors continue to serve more than a fourth of the urban population, though this percentage is down somewhat (26.4 percent in 1998 as against 28.3 percent in 1992). Finally, in rural areas approximately 45 percent of households must spend more than 15 minutes to obtain drinking water, while this percentage is 55 percent in rural areas.

2.2.9 Sewerage

31. Over 80 percent of all Niger households lack toilets, a figure that is even higher (94.1 percent) in rural areas. In the urban areas, over 20 percent of households lack toilets and only 2.6 percent have toilets that are not shared. In the urban areas, the most widespread sanitary facilities are improved latrines, which are used by 52 percent of households.

2.3 Poverty monitoring

32. The poverty analysis provided in this section suffers a great deal from the lack of available data in these areas. The latest surveys make it possible to describe the poverty situation in 1990 and 1993. However, while the data from these surveys can still be used to obtain an idea of poverty in Niger, they must be used with considerable caution inasmuch as there have been many economic and social changes in Niger since they were gathered, including the 50 percent devaluation of the CFA franc in 1994, which certainly had a considerable impact on the economic situation in Niger and on household living conditions.
33. To improve the monitoring of changes in poverty it is important to institute a poverty monitoring system using a program of household surveys. This program will need to conduct very rapidly a survey of household living conditions which includes a consumption budget aspect so as to update the data on poverty and make it possible to design effective projects aimed at combating poverty. Subsequently, the situation would be reviewed every three or four years in order to reorient as necessary the economic policies used to fight poverty.

Table 1. Niger: Changes in Development Indicators

HEADING	1980s	1990s
ECONOMY AND PUBLIC EXPENDITURE		
Population living on less than US\$1 per day (%)		61.5
Per capita GDP	391 (1975)	269 (1998)
Growth of per capita GDP (%)	-4.5 (1982-90)	2.9 (1996-97)
Public expenditure (% of GDP)	13.7 (1989)	12.3 (1997)
Current expenditure on health (% of GDP)	1.2 (1990)	1.4 (1997)
Current expenditure on education (% of GDP)	4.4 (1990)	3.4 (1997)
HEALTH		
Annual population growth rate (%)	2.8 (1977-1988)	3.3 (1997)
Life expectancy at birth (years)	40 (1977-1988)	48 (1998)
Infant mortality rate (‰)	170 (RGP-88)	123 (EDSN-98)
Infant-juvenile mortality rate (‰)	287 (RGP-88)	274 (EDSN-98)
Incidence of weight deficiency (%)	36.2 (EDSN-92)	49.6 (EDSN-98)
Maternal mortality rate (‰)	7 (RGP-88)	7 (EDSN-92)
Births assisted by trained health personnel (%)	33 (EDSN-92)	44 (EDSN-98)
Rate of contraceptive use (%)	4 (EDSN-92)	8 (EDSN-98)
Average fertility index (number of children per woman)	7.3 (RGP-88)	7.5 (EDSN-98)
Children with no vaccinations (% of children aged 12-23 mos.)	-	40 (EDSN-98)
EDUCATION		
Overall gross enrollment ratio	27.5 (1990)	32.33 (1999)
Gross enrollment ratio of girls in primary school (%)	18 (1988)	25.36 (1998-99)
Gross enrollment ratio of boys in primary school (%)	33 (1988)	37 (1999)
Female literacy rate (%)	5.8 (1989)	12 (1997)
Male literacy rate (%)	14.0 (1989)	22 (1997)
ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES		
Access to drinking water (%)	37 (WB/WDI/99)	57 (MHE,1996)
Degree of usage of drinking water (%)	-	1.5 (WB/WDI/99)
ENVIRONMENT		
Protected forest as percentage of total forested area	-	7.6 (WB/WDI/99)
Carbon dioxide emissions	0.6 (WB/WDI/99)	11 (WB/WDI/99)

III. CURRENT POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

3.1 A recapitulation of objectives

34. Niger has devised and implemented a poverty reduction strategy under the National Framework Program to Combat Poverty (PCNLCP). The program was reviewed by a development partners' Round Table held in Geneva in March 1998. The main objective of the program for the short and medium terms is to reduce poverty, and in the long term to eliminate it altogether by means of investments and the implementation of macroeconomic and sectoral policies that focus, on the one hand, on improving the economic conditions of the poor, and, on the other hand, on assigning high priority to developing the social sectors. Among the PCNLCP's specific objectives are the following: (i) expanding opportunities for job creation and measures to promote income-generating activities in rural and urban areas, particularly by promoting a stable food supply and improving standards of living (housing, facilities used by the people); (ii) reducing the rate of population growth by strengthening family planning as part of the health effort and improving women's literacy levels; (iii) improving access to basic health care; and (iv) increasing the proportion of children who attend school in rural areas, and especially the proportion of girls.

3.2 Strategies

35. On the basis of the results of the various surveys that have been conducted for this purpose, the strategy selected takes into account poverty's full range of determining factors, where the poor live, and the sectors where there is potential to reduce poverty. The strategy focuses on improving the economic conditions of the poor, particularly by promoting agricultural, forestry, and pasturage production activities that have the potential to provide a secure food supply and to generate incomes. Other elements of the strategy are improving the supply and coverage of essential social services for poor populations in both quantitative and qualitative terms, and promoting the economic and social advancement of women, as well as protecting disadvantaged groups, improving the health of the population, facilitating access to drinking water, controlling population growth, developing basic education and vocational and skills training, and improving housing.
36. Lastly, the strategy aims to support the strengthening of the institutional capacity of the state and of civil society. Specifically, this will take the form of efforts to train human resources, to organize population groups and help set up basic community structures, and to put in place an information system on poverty. This strategy has been reflected in a broad array of activities, projects, and programs, both new and existing, the principal components of which are designed to achieve the objective of reducing poverty. It is with this in mind that the National Framework Program to Combat Poverty has been devised, validated, and launched, embodying a participatory process of concerted action, including ongoing consultation with the poor, with the administrations concerned, with civil society, and with grassroots community

organizations, through representative structures. Moreover, this same approach has been used in the course of the assessment process and the identification of the program's main strategic lines of action.

37. The National Framework Program to Combat Poverty (PCNLCP) is based upon the following principles: (i) the use of participatory approaches in the process of identifying, planning, carrying out, and evaluating actions; (ii) the effective decentralization of actions, with a view to fostering decision-making capacity and accountability at the local level; (iii) the quest for synergy and complementarity in the implementation of actions by development partners as a group; (iv) the geographical concentration of actions; (v) the adoption of highly labor-intensive techniques; (vi) the systematic incorporation of gender considerations in all activities; (vii) the integration of environmental considerations in all activities; (viii) transparency in administering the program, and the establishment of an information, communication, and feedback strategy; and (ix) the projection of actions on a continuing basis into the future as population groups assume full responsibility for them.

3.3 Priorities identified by village-level communities

38. Participatory approaches on defining poverty and grassroots community identification of the priority actions to be taken have been an integral part of drafting the PCNLCP in order to ensure that the people's real concerns have been properly taken into account. As a consequence, the definition of poverty and the priorities identified for addressing it vary depending upon the agricultural and ecological make-up of the various areas and their potential in terms of natural resources. The target zones for priority intervention which are generally supported by the grassroots communities with a view to rapidly attenuating the effects of poverty pertain to the productive sectors most likely to generate incomes and to any steps likely to improve the social sectors (health, education, water resources). The fundamental concerns of the village-level communities being to attack the economic and sociocultural causes of poverty, the following priorities have been highlighted most often, notwithstanding the region in question:
- Food security (rehabilitation of depleted land to improve crop yields, development of cash crops, creation of cereal grain banks, support for winter crops, creation of village-level shops for the provision of primary commodities, credit for the purchase of fertilizers and for carrying out income-producing activities, principally for developing small-scale trade for women);
 - Health (creation of dispensaries or health centers supported by supplies of essential generic drugs);
 - Education (creation of schools and literacy centers);

- Access to drinking water (digging modern wells, drilling wells, and small-scale drinking water supply systems, etc.);
 - Easing the lot of women (provision of grain mills);
 - Reducing the isolation of production areas by building rural roads and maintaining existing roads with participation by the people.
39. It should also be noted that in the nomadic areas, the above-mentioned priorities are supplemented by concerns regarding meeting the health needs of livestock, support for traditional crafts, the provision of water to grazing areas, and any measures that might contribute to improved management of pastureland.

3.4 Achieved results

40. Although there have been a number of disruptions, linked chiefly to the political climate, which have seriously hampered the implementation of this strategy, some significant results and impacts have been recorded in connection with this initiative, notably: (i) the support of the donor community for the poverty reduction strategy presented by Niger at the Geneva conference; (ii) the implementation of a joint framework for deliberation among the various development partners, civil society, and the administration, which just held its first meeting for 2000; (iii) the establishment of a structure for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the program, supported by two technical units (the UNDP program and the AfDB program); (iv) the establishment of four regional units (with UNDP support), which have carried out specific activities in the areas of education, health, water resources, rural credit, environmental protection, and decentralization; and (v) the assimilation of a great deal of experience as regards public participation in defining development policies, with consultations being held at all administrative levels (communes, districts, departments, and the national level). This participatory process has made it possible to gather the views of the country's various social groups with regard to the causes of poverty, its manifestations, its consequences, and possible solutions.
41. By way of illustration, the three experimental units in N'Guigmi, Zinder, and Mayahi have accomplished the following:
- In the area of microfinance, CFAF 187 million has been distributed to 4,353 members, 3,369 of them women. The total volume of savings mobilized in the period 1998-99 amounts to CFAF 20,642,600, and the loan repayment rate stands at 93 percent.
 - With regard to the strengthening of technical and organizational capacities, several types of organizations were set up by communities in the three areas where the units were established. In all, 48 local development committees, 337 management

committees (cereal grain banks, market gardens, modern water points, rural radio), 18 pre-communal committees, and 39 organizations linking grain banks have come into being.

- With regard to bolstering food security, 283 grain banks have been established, and 860 metric tons of seed have been distributed; three small-scale drinking water supply systems have been installed and 200 wells have been drilled, serving 59,883 beneficiaries.
42. Without question, one of the merits of this strategy has been the favorable follow-on impact resulting from the emergence of dynamic grassroots community organizations and the effective involvement of civil society in all deliberations and decisions relating to national life.
 43. Despite these encouraging results, the program has suffered from a number of shortcomings, particularly the lack of a suitable poverty monitoring and evaluation system and the fact that the macroeconomic dimension has not been taken into account. For this reason, in the forthcoming stages of drafting the final PRSP, discussions will focus not only on updating the analysis of poverty, on deepening macroeconomic strategies and sectoral policies so as to make the necessary adjustments to the PCNLCP, and on designing and implementing an appropriate monitoring and evaluation system, but also on establishing a macroeconomic framework that will make it possible to ensure coherence among the various programs envisaged.
 44. A detailed description of the participatory process implemented for the PCNLCP is contained in an annex to this document.

IV. MEDIUM-TERM MACROECONOMIC AND ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK FOR 2000-2004

45. In the economic and financial sphere, 1999 was marked by the suspension of economic aid from most development partners and the end of the program with the Bretton Woods institutions. This situation, together with unfavorable international economic conditions, had negative repercussions on economic activity and public finances. Thus, real GDP growth, which had been forecast at 4.5 percent, was slightly negative (-0.6 percent) in 1999 as compared with 10.4 percent in 1998. The inflation rate at end-December 1999 was -1.9 percent, largely owing to the contraction of purchasing power attributable to several months' unpaid wages in the civil service. The investment ratio was 10.2 percent in 1999, as against 11.3 percent in 1998.
46. The situation of the country's finances was marked by a slight decline in revenues and an increase in total expenditure vis-à-vis 1998. This was reflected in a worsening of the basic primary deficit and the overall deficit, and an increase in domestic and foreign payments arrears.
47. The tax ratio, one of the convergence criteria of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), was 8.9 percent and 8.5 percent in 1998 and 1999, respectively, well below the 17 percent minimum set for the WAEMU community for 2002.
48. The ratio of public investment from domestic resources as a percentage of tax receipts was 17.1 percent in 1999, or 2.9 percentage points below the 20 percent target set as the WAEMU standard by 2002.

4.1 Macroeconomic and financial policy directions

49. To combat poverty effectively, the authorities have decided to create the conditions for lasting economic growth in particular by reestablishing the main macroeconomic equilibria. Thus, the government's macroeconomic objectives as expressed in its program of economic and social policy directions for the 2000-2004 period are consistent with the economic convergence directions and recommendations within the WAEMU, of which Niger is a member. The objectives in question are (i) to reestablish macroeconomic and financial balance; (ii) to promote sustained, lasting growth; (iii) to strengthen the integration of Niger's economy into the regional economy through the WAEMU and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); (iv) to reduce poverty by strengthening the impact of state investment and promoting investment by the private sector; (v) to pursue economic liberalization; (vi) to promote small and medium-sized enterprises with a view to promoting the integration of the urban and rural economies; and (vii) to put into place a framework that will foster the promotion and development of productive investments. In this way, the government intends to help significantly increase the income of at-risk populations and facilitate their access to essential services (health, education, etc.). The high priority assigned by the government to the rural sector stems from these policy directions.

4.2 Macroeconomic and financial objectives

50. With respect to production, the objectives that have been set relate to: (i) achieving a significant level of economic expansion, led largely by the rural sector where noteworthy growth is expected on the basis of two assumptions: a low-case hypothesis with a real rate of 3 percent; and a high-case hypothesis with a real rate of 4.5 percent; (ii) gradually reducing the external current account deficit, excluding grants, to a level that is less than or equal to 10 percent of GDP by 2002; and (iii) holding inflation below 3 percent (see Annex for selected economic and financial indicators).

4.3 Macroeconomic strategies

51. To attain the aforementioned macroeconomic and financial objectives, the government undertakes to explore the growth sources noted below and to implement the investment program and policies outlined in the paragraphs that follow.

4.3.1 Sources of growth

52. To achieve the growth objectives set, it is essential to increase supply response capacity and to promote diversified economic growth that is broadly based, that is, promote a development growth model that benefits the poor and is sustainable in the medium term. In particular, this implies:

- Sustained growth of rural production;
- The building up of infrastructures supporting rural production;
- Improved exploitation of the opportunities offered by regionalization (regional integration);
- Facilitated access to credit by the poor; and
- The introduction of a sound policy for managing public expenditure, with particular emphasis on improving the quality of expenditure.

As regards rural production, which is the principal source of growth, Niger has numerous opportunities and potentials which, if properly addressed, could make it possible to achieve these growth objectives. In the short and medium terms, the growth potentials and opportunities are in the following areas:

(a) Agricultural subsectors

- **Cowpeas:** Annual production estimates range from 250,000 to 700,000 metric tons, of which 80 percent to 90 percent is exported to Nigeria. This subsector has

enormous growth potential owing to the fact that cowpeas are cultivated in conjunction with millet, which covers most of the cultivated areas in the country.

- **Onion:** For this product, Niger's competitive position in the regional market is solid. From 1989 to 1995, it is estimated that average annual exports of onions amounted to approximately 109,000 metric tons out of production ranging from 150,000 to 225,000 metric tons over the past ten years. These exports represent a gross gain in foreign exchange reserves of about CFAF 10 billion. This subsector, which represents 64 percent of vegetable exports over the period 1992-95, has sizable potential margin for growth in respect of:
 - Yields, which could be substantially increased by using appropriate technologies on top of mastery of the production system by local populations;
 - Areas under cultivation: the production area has potential exploitable land of 30,000 to 50,000 hectares of which only 4,000, or 13-18 percent, are being cultivated;
 - Improved conservation systems, which could lead to a significant decline in post-harvest losses.
- **Sweet pepper:** Sizable quantities of **sweet pepper** are produced, for the most part in the department of Diffa. From 1985 to 1990, production increased from 1,000 to 3,000 metric tons. Over 90 percent of this production is exported to Nigeria, yielding a monetary value estimated at over CFAF 2.2 billion. Production could be increased as a result of various programs now under way (IFAD, CIDA, World Bank) and by revitalizing the marketing system.
- **Groundnuts:** A revival of production has been observed during the past three years (196,000 tons in 1996). An adequate input policy would help groundnuts to regain a significant role in Niger economy. In the prospect of a restart of activities of the largest plant for processing of groundnuts into groundnut oil, groundnuts may still have an important role in the future.
- **Cyperus, sesame, henna, and gum arabic,** for which significant diversification possibilities also exist.
- **Livestock and meat:** The figures on official 1997 exports of livestock on the hoof are 82,102 cattle (4 percent of the total herd), 518,000 small ruminants (or 5.2 percent of the total herd), and 16,000 camelines (4.1 percent of the total herd). Total national meat production is estimated at 70,425 metric tons for 1996, of which 46,110 metric tons were consumed domestically, making Niger a potential exporter. However, export levels have remained extremely low, at 15-40 metric tons per year. Taking into account the existing large margins as regards the herd size and the potential capacities for meat production, the country has enormous possibilities for

increased exports of livestock and meat. Several favorable factors, including the devaluation of the CFA franc and its impact on the prices for exported livestock and the enhanced competitiveness of meat from Niger, added to judicious promotion activities, make it possible to contemplate improved prospects for such exports.

(b) Other possibilities

It must be noted that the country has other opportunities for revitalizing its growth, in particular tourism and crafts, for which there are numerous possibilities, as well as exploiting the gold mines.

❖ Limits and constraints

Making the optimum use of all these possibilities and opportunities and achievement of the desired results may be constrained by the following factors:

- Climatic and ecological constraints: recurrent droughts, increasing desertification, etc.;
- Numerous shortcomings as regards the management of the nation's affairs and the ineffectiveness of administration;
- Shortage of competent human resources;
- Weakness of the physical, institutional, financial, and human resource development infrastructures; and
- Inadequacy of the policies espoused for creating enterprises and the business environment.

Some of the constraints are givens that simply have to be taken into account in devising and implementing any development policy in Niger. These include the climatic and ecological constraints over which there is no control whatever at the current stage of our development.

The other constraints, those pertaining to the management of the nation's affairs, improving the quality of public expenditure, and those associated with the business climate, could gradually be eased over time through the implementation of the macroeconomic and sectoral reforms and policies recommended.

4.3.2 *Investment policies*

53. The State Investment Programs (SIPs) for 2000-2002 will place particular emphasis on selecting projects that respond to the needs of the poor. In the short run, restoring capital expenditures means resolving the problem of external debt arrears. To increase the program's execution rate significantly, the government is determined to improve the

programming cycle by: (i) revising the investment programming system, particularly as regards the methodological aspects of preparing the SIP, and evaluating the impact of projects; (ii) establishing a key group of indicators that will highlight the implications of the SIP in terms of budgetary receipts (counterpart funds), expenditures (recurrent costs), and project and program impact; (iii) improving the ongoing availability of counterpart funds; (iv) rationalizing the project cycle by identifying improved project selection criteria and targeting investments toward activities that will promote growth as well as toward highly labor-intensive projects that will produce incomes for the poor. Private sector investment, both from within Niger and from abroad, will be strongly encouraged in all sectors so as to enable the state to focus its efforts on core sectors and the needs of the poorest segments of the population.

4.3.3 Fiscal policy

54. During the 2000-2004 period, the government plans to implement a strict fiscal policy that will allow aggregate demand to be held to a level consistent with available resources and with regional objectives for restoring the soundness of the macroeconomic framework.
55. To achieve these objectives, plans call for the tax ratio to be increased from 8.2 percent in 2000 and to 10.1 percent by 2003, and for public expenditure to be brought under control and its efficiency improved. In addition, it is planned to hold the line on wage and salary expenditure at 32 percent of current expenditure and tax receipts by 2003.
56. To do this, the government intends to implement the following measures:
 - (i) broadening the tax base and tracking it more closely; (ii) improving tax collection by strengthening tax administration and doing a better job of identifying and tracking family units as the basic taxation unit; (iii) restructuring current expenditure and bringing it under control, taking into account the recommendations brought forth by the reviews of public expenditure already conducted in the health, education, and agriculture sectors. Thus, in accordance with the priority that the government ascribes to poverty reduction, adequate budget allocations will be provided for the sectors under review and as counterpart funding for development projects; (iv) improving the administration of the public debt and gradually reducing domestic and external arrears in the context of an appropriate strategy; (v) rehabilitating and modernizing the administration of public finances by returning to budget and accounting orthodoxy; and (vi) reforming the expenditure cycle and the budget nomenclature.

4.3.4 Monetary and credit policy

57. The monetary authorities will continue to implement, within the community framework, a prudent credit policy compatible with the objectives of stimulating economic activity. Thus, the implementation of the decision taken by the monetary authorities in September 1998 with regard to eliminating direct monetary financing by the state altogether by December 31, 2001, will lead to a significant reduction in net

borrowing by the state, thereby enabling the private sector to be the main recipient of domestic credit. Preparation of a sectoral adjustment program in this regard is well advanced. The government is making a major effort to promote a decentralized credit system which is better adapted to the capacities and needs of poor people living in rural and peripheral urban communities.

4.3.5 Trade policy

58. The outlook for foreign trade is dominated by developments in the uranium subsector, where expansion possibilities remain limited. The government intends to reverse this trend and step up exports. The farm and livestock sectors are the main targets of this strategy. A project to promote exports of farm, livestock, and forestry products, for which a financing agreement has just been signed with the World Bank, is now being popularized in the various regions in order to secure the support of the partners involved.

4.4 Regional integration

59. Niger has strongly committed itself to participating in wider subregional integration efforts (West African Economic and Monetary Union, Economic Community of West African States) so as better to prepare the country's economy to face growing competition from other countries in the subregion and to exploit Niger's comparative advantages more rationally. The fact that the country has deepened its economic integration process, particularly within the framework of the WAEMU with the establishment of a common external tariff, and hence the creation of a customs union, is evidence of the country's will in this regard. Thus, Niger's economy can take better advantage of the opportunities offered by its geographical location, particularly in its relations with Nigeria which, with a return to political stability, is sure to see a high level of economic development, and with other West African countries, Chad, Libya, and Algeria. This will in turn increase the growth potential of Niger's private sector, and its capacity to create wealth and create jobs.

V. SECTORAL POLICIES AND REFORMS

60. Analysis of the poverty situation reveals that the problems listed below are the major causes and factors contributing to a worsening of the poverty experienced by the Niger population, particularly in rural areas:
- Poor access to production factors and means of production, in particular on the part of women (availability of land, water, inputs, and access to credit);
 - Insufficient and poor allocation of the resources assigned to the basic sectors;
 - Insufficient human resources, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and the poor management thereof;
 - Inadequate decentralization of the management of social services;
 - Poor management and inadequate coordination of external assistance;
 - Low level of community participation in the management of development.
61. Therefore, to take the aforementioned factors into account in implementing the poverty reduction policy, and to ensure the rational management of the resources mobilized and create the optimal conditions for the policy's success, the sectoral actions and reforms will be focused on the rural areas where most of the poor live. The resource allocation priorities for the rural sector will respond interactively to the concerns pertaining to the creation of income-generating activities to provide jobs and incomes to the population and to the concerns about satisfying these groups' right of access to essential basic services, including education, health, nutrition, habitat, information, communications, and participation in political and cultural life. It is to meet these requirements that the sectoral policies and reforms set forth below are recommended.

5.1 Rural sectoral policy

62. Given its follow-on impact on industry, trade, commerce, and employment, the rural sector is an important vector of growth and of fight against poverty because of the role it plays with regard to food security and its job creation and income distribution potentials.

5.1.1 Objectives

63. The objectives assigned to the rural sector pursuant to Law No. 97-024 of July 8, 1997 may be summarized as follows: (i) ensuring the food security of the population in a lasting manner; (ii) helping to create jobs and opportunities to foster activities that will create wealth, particularly for the poor; (iii) improving the people's standard of living by increasing their incomes; (iv) creating the follow-on impact necessary to support

growth in other sectors. While pursuing these objectives relating to economic growth, the policy for the sector must at the same time seek to preserve fragile or threatened natural resources.

5.1.2 Strategies and actions

64. The strategies currently being implemented are based on Decree No. 92-030 of July 8, 1992, which adopted guiding principles for a rural development policy focusing in particular on: (i) natural resource management; (ii) security of the food supply; (iii) the intensification and diversification of production; (iv) rural organization; and (v) rural finance.
65. To ensure the achievement of these strategies, the following actions and measures are contemplated, in particular: (i) application of the laws and regulations under the rural code and the establishment of the institutions called for; (ii) the modernization of agriculture and livestock farming by promoting viable local breeds (Azawak type) and the intensification of crop farming; (iii) improving the effectiveness of rural sector program management; (iv) facilitating access to a credit system by generalizing the availability of decentralized financial systems and promoting synergies between such systems and banking institutions; (v) gaining knowledge and control of, and mobilizing, runoff water and groundwater not only to improve the water supply to the population significantly, but also to ensure food and livestock production; (vi) intensifying participatory reforestation activities, using especially productive species; and (vii) expanding the use of energy sources to replace wood, especially coal, petroleum, and solar and wind power.
66. To create optimum conditions for implementing these strategies, a number of reforms have been under way since the 1980s aimed at ensuring a macroeconomic, institutional, and legal environment conducive to increasing rural production, reducing poverty, and improving the security of the population's food supply. Among these reforms the following are particularly worthy of note: (i) the liberalization of trade in farm products and the elimination of monopolies; (ii) the privatization of veterinary services; (iii) the recognition of farmers' land rights in the rural code and its enforcement text regulations; and (iv) the enactment of a new law on cooperatives that enshrines farmers' right to freedom of association.

5.1.3 Results

67. In regard to results, the following are worthy of note: (i) without question, a wealth of technical expertise has been accumulated concerning the fight against desertification and comprehensive natural resource management. Although the final evaluation of certain natural resource management projects is still to be completed, the fact remains that some projects have produced results of which the communities concerned and the partner institutions are very proud. One example worth citing is the Keita project, which has come to be known worldwide thanks to its achievements in the fight against

desertification; (ii) a number of technologies adapted to Niger's circumstances have been identified, and if adopted widely by rural dwellers would enable them to increase production. These technologies have to do with rainwater and irrigation-based agriculture, natural resource management, livestock production, and improved varieties of crops. With regard to livestock health, Niger has gained solid experience in fighting epizootics; and (iii) an effective monitoring and evaluation system has been put in place which focuses both on farm production and on natural resource management.

68. Despite the reforms undertaken in the sector to create an environment conducive to private investment, its amount remains insignificant owing to the absence of appropriate instruments to support private operators. Moreover, the management and effectiveness of investment programs in the sector remain inadequate. For this reason, the government has undertaken to conduct a review of public expenditure in the sector with a view to improving and increasing its impact on the growth of rural production.

In addition, the rural sector is subject to other, no less important constraints: (i) the absence of sufficient financing to ensure that key activities are regularly carried out, particularly in the areas of research, extension activities, and training; (ii) the absence of an appropriate farm credit system to ensure optimum production and marketing conditions for farm products; and (iii) a lack of coordination among the various partners' activities, which makes it difficult to harness their efforts properly in support of an investment program in the sector.

5.2 Education policy

5.2.1 Objectives of the sector

69. The education sector represents one of the pillars of economic and social development through the enhancement of human resources. Pursuant to Law No. 98-12 of June 1, 1998, which sets out directions for the education system, the government established the following strategic objectives: (i) to improve the availability of education and stimulate demand so as to reduce regional disparities and disparities between rural and urban areas; (ii) to improve the quality of education by reducing failure and grade repetition rates; and (iii) to increase the adult literacy rate and strengthen vocational training.

5.2.2 Strategies

70. The strategies to be adopted in order to attain these objectives, which should be reflected in improved allocation of state resources and enhanced efficiency of those resources, are to pay particular attention to education in rural and nomad communities. An effort will be made to secure fuller participation by the population in the administration of education, in sharing school costs, and in the effort to accelerate education. In this perspective, the actions to be carried out will focus on: (i) generalize the geographical affectation of children to schools; (ii) introducing an incentive

program aimed at improving the enrollment ratio for girls; (iv) providing incentives for regular school attendance through aid mechanisms benefiting isolated and poor families; (v) improving the yield of the school system; (vi) strengthening the training of teachers and formatives; and (vii) upgrading the mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating apprenticeship programs. As regards literacy and vocational training, the strategy will focus on the development of relevant and effective programs targeted principally toward young people and women.

5.2.3 Achieved results

71. In spite of the many difficulties encountered in the education sector, encouraging results have been recorded since 1990 in terms of both institutional reforms and hard numbers.
72. The following results have been recorded at the institutional level: (i) the institutionalization within primary education of classes divided into two groups; (ii) the creation in 1996 of a technical group concerned with increasing the proportion of girls attending school; (iii) the institutionalization of an annual campaign to raise awareness and disseminate information with a view to developing synergy with partners to help increase the proportion of children in full-time attendance at school; (iv) the adoption of Law No. 98-12 of June 1, 1998, which sets forth the direction of the education system; (v) the implementation of the Project for Basic Education and Promotion of Bilingual Education; and (vi) the creation of a program to promote literacy, and to provide training for adults, adolescents, and advanced school-children.
73. In terms of hard numbers, the total number of pupils enrolled in Niger's education system rose from 456,144 in 1990-91 to 643,534 in 1998-99—a growth rate averaging 4.4 percent a year.
74. At the same time, the number of pupils enrolled in primary education grew as a proportion of the total school population, from 80.8 percent in 1990-91 to 82.3 percent in 1998-99. This development is also reflected in:
 - Sustained growth in the number of girls attending school. The gross enrollment ratio of girls increased from 20.10 percent in 1990 to 25.40 percent in 1998. This reflects the special attention that has been given to promoting female enrollment.
 - A slight increase in the national overall gross enrollment ratio, which increased from 27.7 percent in 1990 to 32.33 percent in 1999. It bears noting that despite the increase in the actual numbers of children attending school, the growth of the overall gross enrollment ratio was slowed by the significant increase in the overall number of school-age children.
75. It must be noted, however, that implementation of the aforementioned policies and strategies was paralyzed owing to a lack of personnel and poor allocation of available resources. A review of public expenditure has been conducted, and implementation of

the resulting recommendations should make it possible in the future for better use to be made of available resources and for those resources to have a greater impact.

5.3 Health policy

5.3.1 Objectives

76. The chief objective of health policy is to improve the health conditions of the population by 2005. To this end, the following intermediate objectives will be pursued: (i) to lessen the distance between health care centers and the population and make them accountable for their health by means of decentralization of the health system and community participation in the planning and administration of health activities; (ii) to increase the effectiveness of the health prevention system by strengthening the vaccination program and improving health education and environmental health, particularly by improving the people's water supply; (iii) to increase access to basic health services, particularly for children aged 12-23 months and for pregnant females; (iv) to improve the quality of services provided by applying consistent standards; and (v) to provide an appropriate legislative and regulatory environment for the private sector to engage in health-related activities, and to strengthen health service management capacities.

5.3.2 Strategies

77. In order to achieve the results envisaged in regard to health, the health development strategy will be based inter alia on the following: (i) establishing health districts; (ii) fostering community participation by means of health committees, which are bodies to monitor and coordinate actions in the health sector with a view to promoting full participation by the people in the management and control of resources and the development of a partnership approach; (iii) increasing the availability of human, material, and financial resources; (iv) extending health services coverage in order to improve the coverage ratio within 5 km of a health post; (v) training personnel; (vi) fighting all diseases and focusing on preventive medicine that places particular emphasis on hygiene and prophylaxis so as to reduce the causes of disease, on increasing the vaccination rate, and on fighting malaria and STDs; (vii) ensuring that essential medicines are available, and combating the inrush of uncontrolled medications; (viii) the promotion and development of health-related information, education, and communication activities; and (ix) the introduction of an information system to enhance knowledge in the health sector and ensure systematic monitoring of the major diseases. As regards the HIV/AIDS pandemic, a medium-term action plan is now being developed. This program will be the successor to two other programs covering the periods 1989 to 1992 and 1994 to 1998. In addition to this program, a number of awareness campaigns have been undertaken through the media, posters, and drawings.

5.3.3 Results

78. In order to better implement the reforms envisaged, the government adopted a sectoral policy on health in July 1995. The main objective of the policy is to set out the principal actions needed in order to make a significant improvement in the health standards of the population. In addition, a Health Development Plan for the period 1994 to 2000 has been drawn up and implemented by the Ministry of Health, with the support of development partners.
79. Thanks to the implementation of the reforms contained in the health sectoral policy and the Health Development Plan, 1994-2000, significant results were achieved.
80. At the institutional level, the main results were as follows: (i) the implementation of a decentralized health information system, which has performed well and won praise. This information system is updated at the local level and represents the points of view of all partners in the sector; (ii) the carrying out of an annual review of public expenditure at the national level. This process has been decentralized to the health district level. Thus, a highly critical quarterly review is conducted at the health district level, which serves as an important milestone in order for the process to be effectively decentralized and "owned" by the health districts; (iii) the promotion and development of partnership and community participation in carrying out health activities; and (iv) the adoption of consistent standards.
81. Despite these significant achievements, the level of coverage is still low in comparison with the resources deployed, and the rate at which people have sought medical assistance from health posts has declined steadily in recent years. This can be attributed to a number of reasons, particularly frequent shortages of medicines and the implementation of a cost-recovery policy in a milieu of ever-increasing impoverishment, etc. The true causes of this phenomenon need to be examined.

5.4 Transportation and infrastructure policy

5.4.1 *Objectives*

82. Taking into account the fact that the country is landlocked, and covers a vast territory over which its population is thinly spread, the inefficiency of the present transportation system, which depends in particular on the road system, and the increased urbanization of towns and their growing needs for materiel, the government is planning investments in the infrastructure and transportation sector. To deal with the problems affecting the sector, the following main priorities have been identified: (i) improving the road system infrastructure by maintaining and rehabilitating existing roads and building new ones, with special emphasis placed on providing access to rural areas, upgrading transportation services, and improving road safety; (ii) modernizing the transportation sector; (iii) improving the population's housing conditions; and (iv) urban development planning.

5.4.2 Strategies

83. To attain these objectives, the following strategies have been identified:
- (i) implementing projects that have a visible impact on the population's standards of living;
 - (ii) improving the population's participation in the implementation of projects and programs;
 - (iii) giving priority to the use of labor intensive technologies and local materials;
 - (iv) affording access to production areas; and
 - (v) liberalization of the transportation sector.

5.4.3 Results

84. The results achieved include the following: (i) liberalization of the transportation sector; (ii) privatization of road maintenance; (iii) the establishment of an Autonomous Road Maintenance Financing Fund (CAFER); (iv) the creation of many jobs in urban areas, which has helped reduce poverty in the towns and cities; and (v) restructuring of the way in which the road toll system is administered, with the task of collecting tolls being assigned to the private sector. Despite these encouraging results, there have been a number of problems in regard to infrastructure and transportation that need urgently to be resolved: (i) the increasing deterioration of the main road infrastructure, and the age and unsuitability of vehicles; (ii) the lack of transportation links to a number of isolated areas that have strong potential; and (iii) the small scale of the urban projects carried out thus far, which has not allowed the creation of a critical mass of jobs sufficient to contribute to a significant reduction of poverty in urban areas.

5.5 Promotion of the private sector

5.5.1 Objectives

85. To enable the private sector to play its full role in Niger's economic and social development, the government has drawn up a Framework Program for Development of the Private Sector, whose main objective is to make the private sector play a decisive role in economic growth and in the fight against poverty.

5.5.2 Strategies

86. Bearing this in mind, the overall strategy promotes the modernization and strengthening of private-sector economic activity, particularly by completing the process of liberalizing the economy. To attain this key objective, the actions carried out under the program will focus on the following areas: (i) creating a favorable institutional and legal environment; (ii) strengthening the organizational independence of the private sector; (iii) supporting the creation and development of private businesses; (iv) upgrading human resources and strengthening managerial and technical capacities; (v) upgrading local resources; (vi) promoting and developing opportunities arising from regional integration; (vii) consolidating the banking and finance sector; and (viii) speeding up the process of privatizing public enterprises.

To mobilize the resources necessary to implement the outlined program, a donors Round Table on the private sector has been scheduled for November 2000 in Niamey.

5.5.3 Results

87. The government has: (i) revised the Labor Code to increase wage flexibility and worker mobility; (ii) adopted the four volumes of the Commercial Code, and enacted a law that sets out the overall terms and conditions for privatization; (iii) established authorized management centers to support new enterprises; (iv) eliminated the monopoly of the National Employment Bureau with regard to hiring and registering workers in public and private enterprises; (v) harmonized national regulations concerning contracts, and the law on bankruptcy within the framework of the African Business Law Harmonization Project (OHADA); (vi) eliminated the SNTN's monopoly on providing transportation services for mining companies and the ONPPC's monopoly on importing medicines; and (vii) undertaken an extensive program to reform public enterprises. Under that program, being carried out with the assistance of the World Bank, 12 enterprises have been agreed upon for privatization: SNE (Société Nationale des Eaux [National Water Company]), NIGELEC (Société Nigérienne d'Électricité [Niger Electricity Company]), SONITEL (Société Nigérienne des Télécommunications [Niger Telecommunications Company]), SONIDEP (Société Nigérienne d'importations des Produits Pétroliers [Niger Petroleum Importing Company]), Abattoir Frigorifique de Niamey [Niamey Refrigerated Slaughterhouse]; RINI (Riz du Niger [Niger Rice]), OFEDES (Office des Eaux du Sous-sol [Underground Water Resources Bureau]), SPEHG (Société Propriétaire et Exploitante de l'Hôtel Gawèye [Gawèye Hotel Company]), SONITEXTIL (Société Nigérienne des Textiles [Niger Textiles Company]), OLANI (Office du lait du Niger [Niger Milk Administration]); and SNC (Société Nigérienne de Cimenterie [Niger Cement Company]).
88. The last three enterprises on the list have already been privatized, and the process is under way for the other nine.

VI. ALLOCATION OF SOCIAL EXPENDITURE AND IMPACT OF THE HIPC INITIATIVE

89. The government has not yet evaluated the cost of the programs or actions that will be implemented in the framework of the poverty reduction plan. To this end, however, a social expenditure scenario has been developed in order to prepare the framework within which the fiscal policy oriented toward combating poverty could be carried out over the next five years. It is important to stress that this base scenario is predicated on the foreseeable trends in the macroeconomic framework in Niger. In the absence of a reliable estimate of the cost of the poverty reduction programs and a corresponding programming of social expenditure, this scenario simple sketches out the paths for allocating budgetary resources in favor the fight against poverty. Accordingly, social expenditure could evolve as set forth below:

Table 2 : Allocation of main social expenditure on health, education, rural development and road infrastructure in accordance with the base scenario¹

INDICATOR	Average 1995-99	Average 2000-05
Total education expenditure/total government expenditure (%)	22	22
Total basic education expenditure/total education expenditure (%)	50	61
Total basic education expenditure/total government expenditure (%)	11	13
Health expenditure/total government expenditure (%)	13	15
Basic health expenditure/total health expenditure (%)	50	66
Basic health expenditure/total government expenditure (%)	6	10
Total rural development expenditure/total government expenditure (%)	17	15
Total road infrastructure expenditure/total government expenditure (%)	7	5

¹The selection of these sectors reflects the priorities set forth in the interim PRSP and the desire to spreading efforts too thin.

Total education expenditure could represent 22 percent on average of government expenditure other than interest payments in 2000-05, the same level as in 1995-99. Basic education expenditure would represent on average 13 percent of government expenditure (as against 11 percent for the 1995-99 period).

Health expenditure represents on average 15 percent of total government expenditure, as compared to 13 percent for the 1995-99 period. Basic health expenditure, on the other hand, would represent a tenth of government expenditure on average (as against 6 percent during the earlier period).

The allocation of resources in favor of health and education would come at the expense of rural development and road infrastructure, where resource growth would be more moderate. However, project and program resources in these latter sectors are expected to reverse this trend.

6.1 Impact of debt relief on poverty reduction: accelerated scenario

90. It may be noted that, despite the substantial increase in social expenditure in the base scenario as compared to the current situation, such expenditure remains insufficient in terms of the international development objectives in the framework of reducing poverty. Therefore, this second, so-called accelerated scenario would intentionally be a great deal more ambitious than the base scenario. It is predicated on the following hypotheses:

- An increase in social expenditure by utilizing the resources freed by debt relief under the HIPC Initiative. Current estimates show that Niger could derive substantial resources following debt relief, on the order of CFAF 48 billion per year;
- More rational utilization of the additional resources allocated to the health and education sectors;
- Increased allocation of resources in favor of basic education and health in order to achieve the 20/20 target;
- Greater allocation of resources in favor of rural development and road infrastructure.

91. Allocating all the resources derived from debt relief toward poverty reduction could produce the following situation for the period 2000-05:

Table 3: Comparative Allocation of Social Expenditure

INDICATORS	Average 1995-99	Average 2000-05	
		Base	Accelerated
Total education expenditure/total government expenditure (%)	22	22	23
Total basic education expenditure/total education expenditure (%)	50	61	68
Total basic education expenditure/total government expenditure (%)	11	13	16
Health expenditure/total government expenditure (%)	13	15	16
Basic health expenditure/total health expenditure (%)	50	66	74
Basic health expenditure/total government expenditure (%)	6	10	12
Total rural development expenditure/total government expenditure (%)	17	15	18
Total road infrastructure expenditure/total government expenditure (%)	7	5	6

92. To achieve the objectives targeted by this scenario, the government will need to reorient budgetary resources in order to increase:

- The ratio of total education expenditure to total government expenditure to an average of 23 percent as compared to 22 percent in the base scenario;
- The ratio of total basic education expenditure to total government expenditure to an average of 16 percent as compared to 11 percent in the base scenario;

- The ratio of total health expenditure to total government expenditure to an average of 16 percent as compared to 13 percent in the base scenario;
- The ratio of total basic health expenditure to total government expenditure to an average of 12 percent as compared to 6 percent in the base scenario;
- The ratio of total rural development expenditure to total government expenditure to an average of 18 percent as compared to 15 percent in the base scenario;
- The ratio of road infrastructure expenditure to total government expenditure to an average of 6 percent as compared to 5 percent in the base scenario.

Ultimately, as may be observed, this accelerated scenario will be reflected overall in an improvement in the expenditure allocations in the major social sectors, in particular basic education and health. It should further be noted that the results of this accelerated scenario could be enhanced by the effects of applying the measures and reforms recommended for enhancing the quality of public expenditure and, for the education sector, by using existing room for maneuver as regards the student/teacher ratio which stands at 38, a figure well below the levels prevailing in some countries in the subregion (the figure is 52 in Cameroon, for example). Niger could raise the student/teacher ratio to a level closer to that of the other countries. Other measures relating to improving the yield of the system, such as reducing the rate of repeated grades and failures and dropouts, could contribute significantly to improved performance in the education sector.

VII. GOOD GOVERNANCE, DECENTRALIZATION

7.1 Good governance

93. The situation as regards the management of the nation's affairs has been characterized in recent years by numerous shortcomings, in particular: the implementation of fiscal and financial policies have not taken the country's real situation sufficiently into account; poor expenditure and government cash flow management; and lack of transparency in management and the ineffectiveness of control structures. To address these various weaknesses and put in place a system for managing the nation's affairs that corresponds to the requirements of a democracy, the government has committed itself to introduce a good governance policy.

7.1.1 Objectives

94. Good governance, which requires that law and justice be paramount, remains one of the principal objectives of the Niger authorities, who are concerned with this issue for both domestic and external reasons. At the domestic level, Niger has gone through a period of nearly 10 years of democratic transition, and is finally settling in to an atmosphere of peace, liberty, and democracy. This favorable atmosphere cannot be maintained and strengthened unless the people are convinced that practices rooted in good governance will prevail and become systematized.

In this connection, the government explicitly undertook, in its General Policy Declaration of April 2000, that "government action will be based on the principles of good governance—that is, the guiding principles of responsibility, transparency, rigor, and respect for the law in managing the country's affairs."

7.1.2 Strategies

95. In the context of Niger, good governance will derive from the implementation of the following strategies: (i) the establishment of mechanisms for social dialogue, meaning that the people as a whole, either directly or through the representatives of various groups within society, can come together in a spirit of freedom of expression, objectivity, and compromise to agree on immediate and longer-term aspects of each and every one's responsibilities in creating and strengthening a state of good governance. In this connection, the government intends to strengthen the mechanisms for dialogue, consensus-building, and the making of proposals with development partners, national executives, civil society, and NGOs; (ii) the depoliticization of the public administration in order to ensure that actions taken by the state are credible, effective, and lasting; (iii) the establishment of a reliable ongoing monitoring system that will be rigorously enforced across all sectors of activity, including the political sphere, the government, finance, the justice system, and the public sector apparatus at all levels.

7.1.3 *Achieved and expected results*

96. To create conditions that will favor dialogue, social peace and harmony, and transparency in the management of the nation's affairs, a number of concrete actions have been initiated by the government: (i) the promotion of a code of ethics and the establishment of a mechanism to enforce it strictly; (ii) strengthening of the sphere of responsibility of key institutions—notably the National Assembly and the Independent Elections Commission (CENI)—in regard to monitoring electoral activities and actions by the Executive Branch, by carrying training supplementary training programs and by providing the institutions in question with the resources essential for their operation; (iii) the holding of regular meetings between the government, senior public officials, representatives of civil society, and NGOs; (iv) the reviewing of public expenditure in the spirit of the 20/20 initiative, with a view to ensuring a more efficient allocation of funds to the benefit of the basic social sectors and ensuring that these sectors are systematically taken into account in the overall evaluation of sectors, with the support of development partners; (v) the establishment of several commissions or committees responsible for supervising and auditing the activities of the various government administrations; (vi) the drafting and submission to the national court system of a budget review law for 1998, entrusting the exercise of ex-post auditing of the government's management to the judicial branch; (vii) the carrying out of an institutional audit of the senior levels of the public administration responsible for organizing and coordinating the work of the government. On the basis of the conclusions and recommendations of this audit, which was conducted in January 1999, actions have been developed and will be pursued aimed at improving working methods and procedures to make dealings between and within ministries more effective, and to improve relationships between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government.

7.2 *Decentralization*

97. Since independence, decentralization has been at the core of the concerns of the various successive regimes. It must be observed, however, that the results achieved have for the most part been insufficient if not to say extremely poor. Indeed, at present the management of local affairs is characterized by the preponderant role of the central administration in the area of economic development, by the cooption of responsibilities by those local authorities appointed by the central administration, and by the insufficiency of local resources. All these gaps and weaknesses impose a penalty on local initiative and stand as obstacles to achieving the conditions for sustainable local development. For any poverty reduction strategy to be effective and to have a significant impact on the target population groups, it must be built upon accountability and the full involvement of the communities concerned in the expression of their needs and the implementation of recommended solutions. It is in this context that the main lines of the new reform under way on decentralization are set out.

7.2.1 Objectives

98. The new decentralization policy implemented is aimed at the following objectives:
- Consolidating local democracy and good governance;
 - Promoting genuine administration of development;
 - Creating homogeneous economic, social, and cultural development poles.

7.2.2 Strategies

99. To implement the above objectives, the ongoing and future reforms will endeavor first to guarantee not only adequate measures defining institutional jurisdictions and administrative limits, but the effective transfer of decision-making power to the decentralized entities. There will also be an intensification of the efforts to establish and modernize the administration and management system of the territorial governments while making optimum use of the significant contribution that can be made by traditional institutions (sultanates, provinces, cantons, groups, villages, and tribes).

7.2.3 Achieved and expected results

100. The government has engaged in a lengthy consultative process in order to determine how best to draw territorial boundary lines that are well suited to the terrain. This was done while balancing the need to move forward swiftly with an as thorough-going as possible reform of the decentralization process and taking into account the feasibility of the exercise given the scarcity of resources. The consensus seems to be that 13 regions, 55 departments, and 774 communes (of which 618 would be rural communes) should be established.

Development partners—among them the World Bank in the context of the Infrastructure Rehabilitation Program, the European Community, the UNDP, and most bilateral partners—support Niger in achieving its decentralization objectives.

Thanks to pilot projects in which there has been large-scale community participation that has given momentum to the decentralization effort—such as the projects under way in Mayahi and N'Guigmi with UNDP and UNCDF support in the context of the PCNLCP—the government is able, together with its development partners, to learn useful lessons before going ahead with the full-scale implementation of the decentralization exercise.

The decision that a sectoral consultation on decentralization should be organized, which was one of the points that emerged at the Round Table on poverty held in Geneva in March 1998, is being pursued, and the consultation could take place in 2001.

VIII. MONITORING AND EVALUATION ARRANGEMENTS AND SUPPORT OF DECISION-MAKING

8.1 Context

101. For monitoring socioeconomic data, for the major sectors of health, education, and the rural sector, Niger has regularly updated data banks, namely: the National Health Information System (SNIS); the water resources data bank; the education indicators monitoring system; the agricultural statistics monitoring system; the Early Warning System which allows not only for monitoring agricultural production and stocks and imports of agricultural products, but also for general tracking of the food security situation.

These various components strengthen the national statistical gathering and information system, the Directorate of Statistics and National Accounts (DSCN). A geographical information system (SIGNER) rounds out the current arrangements. In addition, since 1997 Niger has prepared and published national reports on sustainable human development. In addition, beyond these arrangements there are also data banks maintained by certain international organizations and NGOs active in Niger (AGHRYMET, ICRISAT, ACMAD, CARE International, etc.).

It should be noted that the situation in this area is generally characterized by multiple levels of duplication, a scattering of efforts, and the lack of harmonization in the data gathering methodologies used.

8.2 Objective

102. In the framework of implementing the PRSP, a system for monitoring and evaluating poverty is essential in order to track changes in the status of the poor so as to make the necessary adjustments in strategies and actions pursued. This system must be based on a structure which is provided with information from the existing socioeconomic data bases, the various project and program reports, and the results of surveys and studies.

Its objective will be to provide the government, civil society, development partners, and the Niger population in general, on a regular basis, with qualitative and quantitative data on:

- The poverty status, living conditions, inequality, and vulnerability of the Niger population;
- The causes and determining factors behind poverty, inequality, and vulnerability;
- The evolution of these phenomena over time;
- The geographical distribution (poverty map); and
- The impact of policies, programs, and projects on poverty reduction.

In particular, the poverty reduction information system will regularly produce a series of poverty reduction indicators. The selection of these indicators, the definitions and concepts used, and the data gathering methods needed for calculating them, will be determined on the basis of broad-based consultations. (See Annex for the list of indicators to be tracked.)

8.3 Strategy and activities

103. To ensure better monitoring and ongoing evaluation, and to achieve a global vision of knowledge about poverty, Niger has undertaken to establish a Poverty Research institute within the Ministry of Planning. In order to have more recent data with a view to updating the poverty profile, data gathering activities have been scheduled for the period during which the PRSP is being finalized (see “Planning Future Steps” in the Annex). For the future, it is envisaged that the Research institute will be regularly be provided with the results of focused and clearly targeted surveys. In addition, the government undertakes to guarantee cooperation between the national statistical committee and the structures tasked with providing input for the information systems, with a view to improving the quality of the statistics produced while lowering costs.

8.4 Decision-making assistance

104. The Ministry of Planning’s DAEFP has been accumulating experience with macroeconomic modeling since 1985. The aim has been to devise tools for short-term macroeconomic forecasting and instruments to facilitate decision-making. Several models have been developed: (1) the BUDNIG, based on the TES, used mainly for GDP and employment projections; (2) the macrofinancial model, which amplifies the BUDNIG so as to incorporate the Table of Government Financial Operations [Tableau des Opérations Financières de l’État] (TOFE), the debt, the balance of payments, and public investment; and (3) the calculable general equilibrium model, adapted to the specific case of Niger. This has been devised on the basis of a matrix of social factors determined from surveys household budgets and consumption. The advantage of this model over the other two is that it makes it possible to simulate the impact of economic policy decisions on the various social strata considered. Consequently, it offers the advantage of being well suited to monitoring poverty reduction strategies. In the past, these models have proven very useful for determining the macroeconomic framework, for conducting international negotiations, and for drawing up budgets. Unfortunately, these tools are not currently being used in spite of their educational and research value for the economy. All three models have a major weakness, however, in that they are not suitable for assessing the impact of investment on Niger.
105. To overcome this problem, the government will institute a model that will make it possible to assess the impact of public and private investment on growth and to measure the relationships between growth and poverty reduction in various population groups. The model must also make it possible to generate key poverty monitoring

indicators. The focus will be on using the results of this modeling and disseminating its findings.

IX. CAPACITY BUILDING FOR DRAWING UP AND MONITORING THE PRSP

106. Drawing up and implementing poverty reduction strategies is an extremely complex exercise that requires strengthening the capacities of the major public administrations involved in the process, particularly as regards devising and monitoring/evaluating these strategies. Within this framework, the Niger government calls upon its partners for their assistance with capacity building, especially in the following areas:
- Development of a macrosocial analysis model;
 - Improving the mechanisms for incorporating the poverty reduction dimension into budgetary and planning procedures;
 - Strengthening management and social services capacities; and
 - Creating and strengthening a poverty information system.
107. This assistance will focus on strengthening the resources of the Statistics Directorate at the central level and in its regional offices so as to enable it to respond effectively to its mandate of collecting and processing statistical information and socioeconomic analyses. In addition, partners will support the regular production of national human development reports which will continue to provide, on a participatory basis, useful information on the poverty situation in Niger. Finally, they will provide the resources necessary for carrying out the small qualitative surveys to be conducted in the various regions of the country in order to understand the rural population's perceptions about its life experiences in the context of poverty.
108. These different support measures will make it possible generally to provide the various administrations concerned with resources and capacities, in particular through training and the purchases of methodological tools which make it possible to improve the way in which the poverty dimension is taken into account in developing the macroeconomic framework and the impact of public and private investment on growth and poverty reduction at the level of the various population groups, and to recommend a permanent mechanism for monitoring and evaluation.

X. THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS IN DRAWING UP THE FINAL PRSP

10.1 Context

109. In collaboration with its main development partners and representatives of civil society, from 1996 to 1998 Niger drew up a poverty reduction and/or alleviation strategy that was based on a participatory approach. The essential aim in that exercise of devising a strategy for combating poverty was to draw up a medium-term plan whose purpose was to respond adequately to the people's concerns in regard to reducing poverty in Niger.
110. The process consisted of letting the people's representatives take the lead in analyzing their own situation, devising their own alternatives for reducing or alleviating poverty, and determining themselves the actions to be undertaken and the priorities to be set. To this end, the process was conducted from village communities right up to the national level, through all the intermediate levels of consensus-building and decision-making, namely the cantons, districts, and regions. This process is described in detail in the Annex.
111. A similar process will be used for drawing up the final PRSP. The PCNCLP's institutional structures for formulation and monitoring will serve as a reference point for the institutional framework for preparing and implementing the final PRSP. In light of the experience gained with the PCNCLP, the government plans to impart new dynamism to the participatory process, to broaden it by creating structures at the level of the various ministries and communes, and to deepen it by involving the programs and projects already under way. The government's major concern is to ensure the broadest possible participation by all actors in the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of the program. In addition, in order to remain consistent with the imperatives of a policy predicated on priority objectives of reducing poverty, the government will take the steps necessary to ensure that the steering mechanism for the PRSP will serve as a reference coordination framework for all the steering mechanisms for existing sectoral programs. The government plans to introduce decentralized institutional structures for preparation and implementation of the PRSP down to the last administrative echelon.

At the national level:

Several structures will function at this level:

- **A national steering committee.** This committee will be chaired by the Prime Minister and Head of Government. The committee will be made up of all the ministers, representatives of donors, of civil society (public and private media, NGOs, labor unions, and socioprofessional associations), parliament, and the regions. Its missions will be to:

- Define the broad political and strategic directions;
- Ensure proper execution of the directions and recommendations made at the national level;
- Ensure the participation and involvement of all social groups in the process;
- Validate the framework Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper to be submitted for approval to parliament;
- Supervise the drawing up and implementation process of the program and negotiate with the development partners;
- Ensure the implementation, follow up and monitoring of the program.

The national committee will meet as often as necessary.

- **An interministerial technical steering committee.** This committee will be chaired by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Planning, and will be made up of all the secretaries-general of the ministries and representatives of civil society. It will have a permanent secretariat, perhaps the technical steering unit of the PCNCLP. Its missions will be to:
 - Provide technical supervision for the entire preparation of the Program;
 - Provide technical organization of the work and coordination of the various sectoral and regional structures involved in program formulation;
 - Summarize all the sectoral, regional, and local contributions to program preparation, ensuring the program's consistency with the defined objectives for poverty reduction and with the macroeconomic framework;
 - Regularly inform the National Steering Committee of progress with the program.
- **Sectoral coordination committees.** A committee will be created at the level of each minister, and chaired by its secretary general. The Research and Programming Directorate will provide the secretariat for the committee, which will be made up of representatives of all directorates, departments, and associated projects. This committee will be charged with establishing a framework for concertation and examination which involves all ministry personnel and socioprofessional partners, making it possible to exteriorize the entire ongoing poverty reduction process. The mission of the committee will be to:

- Inform and sensitize all ministry personnel and socioprofessional partners and elicit their full commitment to the preparation and implementation of the program;
 - Draw up a participatory sectoral analysis overview;
 - Develop a national sectoral poverty reduction program, taking into account constraints, sectoral priorities, strong points, requirements, and proposed solutions from the grassroot communities.
- **A Permanent Secretariat for the Program.** Under the authority of the Ministry of Planning, the Permanent Secretariat will be responsible for technical monitoring of the drawing up and implementation of the program.
 - **A committee of all donors** will be established in order to ensure that their interventions are coordinated and harmonized.

At the regional level:

- **A regional committee for PRSP preparation and monitoring.** A committee will be established at the level of each region, and will be chaired by the Prefect assisted by the Departmental Director of Planning, which will provide the secretariat. This committee will be made up of all the heads of the regional offices, representatives of donors and development projects represented at the regional level, national and local political leaders, and representatives of civil society. The mission of the committee will be to:
 - Enhance the awareness of the entire region of what is at stake in the process;
 - Organize and lead work in the subregions and provide for the synthesis thereof;
 - Establish the regional participatory analysis;
 - Formulate regional poverty reduction programs;
 - Define the feasibility of regional programs, their financing modalities, and the degree to which the people themselves are involved in their implementation.

At the subregional and local levels:

- **Subregional committees.** Subregional committees will be established in each district, made up of the heads of the district offices, national and local political leaders, representatives of donors and locally represented projects, and civil society. The committees will be chaired by the head of the district-level planning office. Their missions will be to:

- Enhance the awareness of the entire district of what is at stake in the process;
 - Organize and lead the work of the communes and administrative officers and provide for the synthesis thereof;
 - Establish the subregional participatory analysis;
 - Enable the various representatives to identify and rank priorities and the overall and specific strategies of their units;
 - Formulate the subregional poverty reduction program.
- **Local committees.** These committees, which will be in direct contact with the people, will be the locus of active participation and expression by the village-level communities. A committee will be set up at each commune or administrative post, and will be chaired by the mayor or head of the administrative post. It will be made up of all the representatives of technical offices, national and local elected officials, representatives of donors and projects represented locally, and civil society. The missions of these committees will be to:
 - Conduct a participatory analysis exercise in order to take the real needs of the people into account by involving them from the outset in the identification of solutions to their problems, and in the definition of the implementing modalities of poverty reduction efforts;
 - Define realistic priority objectives and identify priority development actions that will have a major impact on reducing poverty in their units;
 - Develop a local program and projects matched with assistance and implementation strategies, with the participation and effective involvement of the beneficiaries.
 - **At all levels** a communications mechanism will be introduced in order to ensure the flow of information and feedback.

10.2 Constraints associated with the participatory process initiated

112. In instituting the participatory process for preparing the PRSP, proper account will be taken of the major constraints encountered in the course of PCNLCP activities, as follows:
- Low education level of the population;
 - The scope of poverty, resulting in public impatience and the desire to have all needs met on an emergency basis;

- The lingering custom of submission to the authorities; and
- The dependency syndrome and wait-and-see attitudes.

10.3 Future activities and support requirements

113. The definition, introduction, and operation of an ongoing process ensuring the effective participation of civil society, donors, and NGOs will be one of the important areas of activity in preparing the final PRSP (see Annex on Future Steps). Special importance will be accorded to the following activities identified during preparation of the PCNLCP:

- Taking into account the existing experience with participation in the various sectors, through the NGOs;
- Identifying the players and partners participating in the PRSP preparation process, and analyzing their characteristics;
- Supporting and intensifying information and awareness programs on the participatory approach and the accountability of the population in implementing and monitoring actions;
- Literacy training;
- Support for civil society training (NGOs and Associations in particular);
- Training and monitoring/evaluation of the various population groups;
- Support for the decentralization process (acceleration of the process already initiated).

XI. STAGES OF AND TIMETABLE FOR FINAL PRSP PREPARATION

114. This interim paper has been prepared with the cooperation of the various sectoral ministries concerned, after holding an awareness seminar on the PRSP in April 2000 which included representatives of the government; the central, regional, and subregional administrations; foreign donors; civil society; the various socioprofessional associations; and representatives of the people. The policies and strategies set forth in the interim PRSP are those defined and implemented at the conclusion of the participatory process that led to the National Framework Program for Poverty Reduction.
115. Thus, the experience gained during implementation of the PCNCLP will enable the government to take the steps necessary to complete its final PRSP toward the end of 2001 (see the annexed preparation timetable). This preparation will involve three phases: (i) gathering and analysis of the available data in order to update the assessment of the dimensions of poverty in Niger, identify the various constraints affecting poverty reduction, and propose priority approaches to poverty reduction and improving the economic climate of the country; (ii) proposing a cohesive macroeconomic framework for the medium term; and (iii) drawing up the strategy paper, which will identify the priorities, objectives, sectoral poverty reduction strategies, and monitoring/evaluation mechanism.
116. Each of these major stages will entail an arrangement for consultation and concertation involving all development partners and civil society.
117. The government will take steps to ensure that the process involves the following players: (i) the public administration (executive branch); (ii) the National Assembly (legislative branch); (iii) the private sector (national economic partners); (iv) civil society; (v) the people and socioprofessional associations; (vi) the NGOs (national and international); (vii) representatives of rural associations; and (viii) international financial partners and, later on, local elected officials.
118. In order to internalize the process, ensure an iterative process of top-to-bottom review, involving all echelons of the administrative organization (villages, communes, districts, departments) through the decentralization of the institutional structures for preparing and implementing the PRSP.
119. The institutional structures for formulating and monitoring the PCNCLP could be used as a reference for the institutional framework for preparing and implementing the final PRSP.

ANNEXES

Participatory Framework for Drawing Up the Framework Program to Combat Poverty

Stages	Actions carried out	Methodology	Instruments, tools, aids	Participants, players	Desired results
1. Information and awareness-raising	1. Informing communities and raising their awareness at the level of the regions covered (urban and rural areas)	– Descriptions and open meeting discussions of the objectives, content, and mechanisms for carrying out the household budget and consumption survey	– A participatory approach	– Senior officials of the DSCN – Communities – Authorities – Civil society	– Communities that are well informed and aware as to how the program will go ahead and the data will be collected.
2. Carrying out the National Budget and Consumption Survey	1. Carrying out statistical surveys on the consumption and socioeconomic conditions of households	– Sampling – Selection of households to be surveyed – Meeting communities in their homes (polling survey)	– Survey forms – Individual interviews (questionnaire)	– Communities – Statistics Directorate	– Data collected on consumption and socioeconomic conditions of households
3. Conducting a study on the profile of poverty in Niger	1. Utilization of data from the National Budget and Consumption Survey (urban and rural phases) 2. Preparation of the analysis report.	– Recruitment of consultants	– Working meeting of consultants	– Senior officials of the DSCN – University	– Poverty line for Niger determined – Determining factors of poverty identified

Stages	Actions carried out	Methodology	Instruments, tools, aids	Participants, players	Desired results
4. Analysis of poverty, and identification of the needs of the poor	1. Consultations with various population groups (men, women, young people) 2. Consultation with regional authorities and other partners working with the communities 3. Drawing up of an analysis of poverty – Identification of the poor – Identification of where they live – Description of the scope of poverty 4. Establishment of a list of needs to be met to reduce poverty, grouped by order of priority, by area, and by sector	– Open meetings held separately with each of the various population groups (women, men, young people, etc.)	– Community interviews – Interviews with groups of opinion makers – Interviews with young people – Interviews with grassroots organizations – Interviews with authorities	– Technical Services, grassroots organizations, communities, authorities, and other local partners	– Clear identification of the real needs of the poor, presented according to order of priority and by administrative unit.
5. Feedback. Preparation of the analysis, showing the needs identified and the priorities determined by the communities	1. Organization of feedback sessions in the form of open meetings with the community, to confirm the list of needs identified with the various groups and all the units concerned.	– Open meetings, one with each target group	– Meetings with groups involved in the phase of gathering information on needs	– Regional Technical Services, associations, and local players in development	– Fine-tuning the list of needs and confirming it with the communities concerned

Stages	Actions carried out	Methodology	Instruments, tools, aids	Participants, players	Desired results
6. Drawing up of regional programs to combat poverty	<p>1. Drawing up of a program and the corresponding priorities in each subregion.</p> <p>2. Drawing up of a regional poverty reduction program</p>	<p>– Summarization and scheduling of actions to be carried out in each area</p> <p>– Establishment of regional committees to draw up programs and priorities</p>	<p>– Reports of subregional technical committees</p> <p>– Reports of regional technical committees</p>	<p>– Senior district officials, NGOs, associations, etc.</p> <p>– Senior departmental officials, NGOs, associations</p>	<p>– Drawing up the list of priorities and specific poverty reduction programs for each region</p>
7. Validation of regional programs	<p>1. Subregional validation workshops</p> <p>2. Validation workshops focusing on the regional programs drawn up</p>	<p>– Subregional workshop/seminars to validate programs</p> <p>– Regional workshop/-seminars to validate programs</p>	<p>– Work of committees</p> <p>– Plenary sessions</p> <p>(Reports)</p>	<p>– Senior regional officials and representatives of the communities, civil society, and development partners</p>	<p>– Approval and confirmation of regional programs to combat poverty</p> <p>– Acceptance by all local development players of the choices made</p>
8. Drawing up of the National Framework Program to Combat Poverty	<p>1. Evaluation of past policies and actions undertaken by the state and by its development partners.</p> <p>2. Carrying out of an analysis of poverty at the national level</p> <p>– Identification of the poor</p> <p>– Identification of where they live</p> <p>– The scope of poverty</p>	<p>– The conducting of an overall analysis and assessment of development policies and their impact by the sectoral departments and the national committee responsible for drawing up the National Framework Program to Combat poverty</p> <p>– The carrying out of a general analysis of poverty in Niger by the interministerial committee, divided into subcommittees by topic, and aided by consultants from within Niger and abroad</p>	<p>– Organization of work at the subcommittee level, and summarization and reaching of consensus in plenary sessions. Reports</p> <p>– As above, and finalization by the closed rapporteur committee</p> <p>(Document)</p>	<p>– Interministerial committee</p> <p>– Consultants from within Niger and abroad</p> <p>– Technical ministries</p> <p>– Development partners (in particular the United Nations Development Program, European Union, and World Bank)</p> <p>– Other resource persons</p>	<p>– Exhaustive analysis of poverty, taking into account the analysis carried out at the regional level</p>

Stages	Actions carried out	Methodology	Instruments, tools, aids	Participants, players	Desired results
	<p>3. Formulation of the national strategy to combat poverty</p> <p>4. Drawing up of the National Framework Program to Combat Poverty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Preparation of a document on the national strategy to combat poverty by the same committee, with the support of the aforementioned consultants – Preparation of a document setting out a summary of the analysis, the strategy itself, and the main lines of action to be undertaken pursuant to the national program (identification of three main subprograms) 	<p>As above</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Identification of actions currently under way and determination of the principal lines of future action to be undertaken pursuant to the program – Finalization of the document by the rapporteur subcommittee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Interministerial committee – Interministerial committee, representatives of the regions and of civil society, consultants from within Niger and abroad, and resource persons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Poverty reduction strategies at both the regional and national levels – Availability of the national poverty reduction program
<p>9. Internalization and validation of the National Framework Program to Combat Poverty at the regional level (regional consultations)</p>	<p>1. Subregional workshops (at the district level)</p> <p>(Participation by representatives of each canton)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Presentations in plenary session – Work in committee – Rapporteur summarization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reports of the subcommittees – Report of the rapporteur committees <p>(General report)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Community representatives – Representatives of traditional and administrative authorities – Technical Services from the district administration – NGOs and local associations – Departmental services – Consultants from within Niger 	

Stages	Actions carried out	Methodology	Instruments, tools, aids	Participants, players	Desired results
	2. Regional workshops	As above	As above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Representatives from the subregions (communities, authorities, NGOs and associations, resource persons) – Representatives of technical support personnel – Consultants from within Niger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Regional reports summarizing the analysis of poverty, strategies, and identification of actions carried out – Establishment of regional priorities – Verification as to how the choices made fit in with the national directions of the National Framework Program to Combat Poverty
10. Internalization and validation of the National Framework Program to Combat Poverty at the national level	<p>1. Technical workshops attended by technical experts and representatives of civil society</p> <p>2. National enrichment and validation workshop</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Working session in closed committee, in preparation for the national workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Organization of work in plenary session (Workshop report) – Subcommittees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis - Strategy - Programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Interministerial committee – Consultants from within Niger – Technical ministries – Resource persons – Civil society – Representatives from the regions (communities, authorities, technical experts) – Technical sector ministries – Development partners – Resource persons – Representatives of civil society (associations, NGOs, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Content of the National Framework Program to Combat Poverty amended on the basis of information provided as a result of the regional consultation process – National Framework Program to Combat Poverty enriched – Regional programs and actions compared – National Framework Program to Combat Poverty internalized and enriched

Stages	Actions carried out	Methodology	Instruments, tools, aids	Participants, players	Desired results
11. Review and approval of the National Framework Program to Combat Poverty by the Government and the National Assembly	1. Review of the National Framework Program to Combat Poverty by the government for its opinion and approval	– Council of Ministers meeting	– Presentation by the Ministry of Planning	– Government	– National Framework Program to Combat Poverty receives Council of Ministers approval
	2. Review of the National Framework Program to Combat Poverty by the National Assembly	– Presentation of the program, and organization of workshops for members of the National Assembly	– Presentation and discussion led by the National Coordinating Unit	– Ministry of Planning	– Members of the National Assembly made aware of the content of the National Framework Program to Combat Poverty
12. Distribution of documents to the various partners	1. Documents for the Round Table forwarded to all partners			– Ministry of Planning, and the UNDP	– Invitation of partners and participants to attend the Round Table
13. Organization of the Round Table in Geneva	1. Presentation on the socio-economic and political situation in Niger	– Presentations to the conference by the Prime Minister and members of the government, discussions in plenary session, and negotiation with those partners in attendance	– Oral statements – Deliberations – Interviews	– Members of the government – Representatives of the Interim Committee – Representatives of Civil Society – Bilateral and multilateral donors	– Approval of Niger’s strategy for combating poverty
	2. Presentation of the National Framework Program to Combat Poverty	– Statements by the Minister of Planning, technical experts, and representatives of civil society	– Presentations	– Participation by approximately 30 countries and financial institutions in attendance at the conference	– Support from the donor community for the National Framework Program to Combat Poverty – Expressions of interest in funding the program, and announcements of contributions

Stages	Actions carried out	Methodology	Instruments, tools, aids	Participants, players	Desired results
14. Reporting back on the outcome of the Geneva conference	<p>1. Mission to report back to the field on the results of the Geneva conference</p> <p>2. Provision of information and awareness-raising in regard to the structure for directing, monitoring, and evaluating the program</p> <p>3. Instructions and directives on how the resources announced can be mobilized (preparation of program and project proposals)</p>	<p>– Organization of field missions to report back to all departmental capitals on the conclusions and recommendations of the Geneva conference</p>	<p>– Meetings with traditional and administrative authorities</p> <p>– Meeting of senior officials</p>	<p>– Ministry of Planning</p> <p>– Project officers</p> <p>– Representatives of the communities, the authorities, civil society, and the technical services</p>	<p>– Information on the results of the Geneva Round Table conveyed to the various partners in the field</p> <p>– Presentation to partners in the field of information on the structure for directing, monitoring, and evaluating the program</p>
15. Establishment of a structure for directing, monitoring, and evaluating the program	<p>1. Measures to establish structures for directing and monitoring the program.</p> <p>2. Carrying out of information and awareness-raising missions in the field</p>	<p>– Administrative measures to establish the various structures for directing, carrying out, monitoring, and evaluating actions taken under the program, and the corresponding missions</p>	<p>– Ministerial decrees</p>	<p>– Ministry of Planning</p> <p>– Communities</p> <p>– Traditional and administrative authorities</p> <p>– Technical services</p> <p>– NGOs</p> <p>– Associations</p>	<p>– Establishment of a structure for directing, monitoring, and evaluating the program</p> <p>– Involvement of the various development partners in monitoring the execution of the program</p>
16. Establishment of a Poverty Research Institute	<p>1. Preparation of TDR studies</p> <p>2. Research trip to a neighboring country to view similar ventures there</p>	<p>– Recruitment of consultants both from within Niger and abroad, to draw up the framework for the activities, sphere of responsibility, and workings of the research institute</p>	<p>– TDR</p> <p>– Consultation</p>	<p>– Statistics Directorate</p> <p>– Ministry of Planning (DPP)</p> <p>– UNDP</p> <p>– Technical ministries</p>	<p>– Getting the Poverty Research Institute operational</p>

Stages	Actions carried out	Methodology	Instruments, tools, aids	Participants, players	Desired results
17. Mobilization of resources	<p>1. Identification of poverty reduction programs and projects at the community level</p> <p>2. Preparation of program and project proposals (more than 40 proposals have been prepared by the regions)</p> <p>3. Finalization of program and project proposals forwarded to the national level (between the regions and the Ministry of Planning)</p>	<p>– Establishment of technical teams, with participation by representatives of NGOs and other local associations</p>	<p>– Reference material for the preparation of program and project proposals</p>	<p>– Communities</p> <p>– Traditional and administrative authorities</p> <p>– Technical services</p> <p>– NGOs</p> <p>– Associations</p> <p>– Technical experts and NGOs</p> <p>– Ministry of Planning</p> <p>– Regional planning directorates</p> <p>– NGOs</p>	<p>– Specific actions to reduce poverty identified in each region</p> <p>– Program and project proposals drawn up and forwarded to the national level</p> <p>– Amendment of program and project proposals</p>
18. Implementation of the program	<p>Opening of four local offices for implementing the National Framework Program to Combat Poverty (in N'Guigmi, Zinder, Mayahi, and Bankilaré)</p>	<p>– Design and execution of local programs</p>	<p>– Local programs</p>	<p>– Ministry of Planning</p> <p>– Donors, UNDP</p> <p>– NGOs</p> <p>– Residents of the four towns</p> <p>– Technical personnel</p>	<p>– Monitoring and evaluation reports on the local development projects</p>

Policy area	Objectives / Policies	Strategies and measures	Time frame
<p>(Fiscal policy, concluded)</p> <p>1.4 Monetary and credit policy</p> <p>Sectoral policies</p> <p>1.5 Promotion of the private sector</p>	<p>– Increasing the efficiency of the banking system and improving financial intermediation</p> <p>– Ensuring that the private sector pays a decisive role in economic development and in the fight against poverty</p>	<p>– Putting the accounting of operations on a sound footing</p> <p>– Establishing a Surveillance Board to oversee the Treasury system</p> <p>– Appointing officials with signing authority to handle tax receipts (DGI, DGD)</p> <p>– Reforming the lending authority system</p> <p>– Defining the duties and responsibilities of the Treasury according to the true needs of the Republic of Niger, rather than simply following a foreign model</p> <p>– Establishing structures to replace the main public accounting system for state operations</p> <p>– Pursuing prudent monetary and credit policies</p> <p>– Pursuing efforts to consolidate the financial system</p> <p>– Taking part in the activities of the regional financial market</p> <p>– Promoting exports</p> <p>– Giving fresh drive to financial institutions</p> <p>– Making the most of human resources and local resources</p> <p>– Speeding up the privatization program</p> <p>– Creating a suitable institutional and legal environment, and establishing conditions for healthy competition</p> <p>– Strengthening the private sector’s organizational independence</p>	<p>June 2000</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>2000-2004</p> <p>2000-2004</p>

Policy area	Objectives / Policies	Strategies and measures	Time frame
<p>(Promotion of the private sector, concluded)</p> <p>1.6 Rural sectoral policy</p>	<p>– Ensuring a sustainable food security of the population</p>	<p>– Supporting the creation and development of private firms, for which purpose the Niger Entrepreneurship Project (EAN) has been set up as a mechanism to foster the creation of microenterprises and small businesses</p> <p>– Strengthening managerial and technical capacities</p> <p>– Making the most of opportunities arising as a result of regional integration</p> <p>– Consolidating the banking and financial sector</p> <p>Ensure a rational management of natural resources by:</p> <p>– Implementing a National Sustainable Environment and Development Program</p> <p>– Enforcing the laws, rules, and regulations of the Rural Code, and upgrading the institutions established under it</p> <p>– Identifying and utilizing rainwater runoff and groundwater, not only to ensure that the objective of providing drinking water for 60 percent of the population by 2004 can be met but also as an underpinning of farm and livestock production</p> <p>– Introducing new growing methods that are more productive and better suited to the climate</p> <p>– Instituting a program to recover land suitable for growing crops, by means of efforts in the areas of water and soil conservation and soil protection and rehabilitation</p> <p>– Extension of dune fixation operations</p> <p>– Applying forest management practices over an area of 1,000,000 hectares by 2004</p> <p>– Building 30,000 kilometers of firebreaks</p>	<p>2000-2004</p>

Policy area	Objectives / Policies	Strategies and measures	Time frame
(Rural sectoral policy, continued)	<p>- Contribute to the creation of jobs and opportunities to promote wealth-generating activities, in particular for the poor, and improve the standard of living by increasing incomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stocking 400 ponds with fish over a five-year period - Increasing the land area subject to protection and conservation measures - Reducing industrial pollution by 20 percent by 2004 - Intensifying participative reforestation, in particular with economically viable species - Extension training on energy sources to replace wood, including coal, oil, solar power, and wind power <p>Diversifying and intensifying farm production with a view to achieving food security and making a significant contribution to economic growth by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing financing for agricultural research and for providing inputs - Launching a long-term extension program - Improving the management and effectiveness of rural sector programs - Implementing a system to ensure proper coverage of immunization and livestock services - Implementing a system to ensure proper coverage of immunization and livestock services - Strengthening capacities for storing and marketing farm and livestock products - Developing grain banks at the private operator and producer level - Integrating rural strategies into government approaches for preventing food crises 	

Policy area	Objectives / Policies	Strategies and measures	Time frame
(rural sectoral policy, continued)	<p>– Provide the locomotive effect required for growth in the other sectors</p>	<p>Financing the sector by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Establishing appropriate financing mechanisms for the agricultural sector through the generalization of decentralized financial systems and the jump starting of a new rural credit system – Rehabilitation of the road infrastructure and the creation of new rural tracks – Development and implementation of a food security program <p>Organizing rural producers to take charge of their own development by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Establishing training and management programs for rural organizations – Strengthening the legal and institutional framework with a view to improve the exercise of free association – Making NGOs accountable – Introducing financial support benefiting farmer organization <p>– Strengthening the integration of the urban and rural economies by developing small and medium-sized businesses</p>	

Policy area	Objectives / Policies	Strategies and measures	Time frame
<p>(rural sectoral policy, concluded)</p> <p>1.7 Transportation and infrastructure policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving road infrastructure through maintenance, rehabilitation, and construction, with particular emphasis on opening up access to isolated parts of the country - Improving housing conditions and planning urban development - Modernizing the transportation sector - Improving the supply of and demand for education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting small industries associated with stock farming and agriculture - Establishing a road maintenance system - Removing the state from direct involvement in maintenance of the road system, and transferring this activity to the private sector - Launching large numbers of new projects to build rural roads to provide access to farming areas - Improving the people's housing conditions - Implementing projects that have a visible impact on the people's standard of living - Improving people's ability to take part in implementing urban development projects and programs - Promoting the use of local labor and local materials - Improving the quality of transportation services and highway security - Developing air transport - Restructuring of transportation - Liberalization of transport sector Making preschool education accessible to most children by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing the enrollment ratio from 33 percent in 1999 to 38 percent in 2002 and 45 percent in 2005 by increasing the proportion of girls in schools to at least 45 percent over the same period - Developing and making the most of other types and forms of basic primary education (experimental schools, merdersas, Koranic 	<p>2000-2004</p> <p>2000-2004</p>
<p>1.8 Education policy</p>			

Policy area	Objectives / Policies	Strategies and measures	Time frame
(Education policy, continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving the quality of education by reducing drop-out and failure rates 	<p>schools, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adapting and improving the productivity of the system with a view to reducing the proportion of pupils having to repeat a year and reducing the failure rate on examinations - Preparing a comprehensive enumeration of schools - Building and rehabilitation of classrooms - Establishing an incentive program to encourage more girls to enroll in primary education - Rationalization classes that are divided into two groups or in which several grades are taught - Reducing regional disparities and disparities between rural and urban areas by giving priority to rural areas in classroom construction and school staffing - Encouraging regular school attendance by means of aid mechanisms that benefit poor or isolated families, and particularly school meal programs - Restructuring and strengthening initial teacher training through the introduction of a training program for trainers and supervisors. - Making the necessary textbooks and manuals available both to pupils and to teachers - Modernizing teaching and apprenticeship methods - Improving, renewing, modernizing and adapting education curricula, course content, and teaching methods in the schools in question 	

Policy area	Objectives / Policies	Strategies and measures	Time frame
<p>(Education policy, concluded)</p> <p>1.9 Health policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increasing the literacy rate and strengthen vocational training – Bring the people closer to health centers and involve them in the management of their own health, and community participation in the planning and administration of health activities – Improving the effectiveness of the preventive health system by strengthening vaccination programs, and improving health education and environmental sanitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improving young people’s vocational and practical training – Strengthening mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the apprenticeship process – Decentralizing the health system by introducing health committees, bodies for monitoring and coordinating development activities in the health sector with a view to promoting full participation of the people in management and resource control – Introducing community participation in the planning and administration of health activities – Enhancing the preventive health system – Raising the vaccination rate among children aged 12 to 23 months from 40 percent to 60 percent – Increasing the rate of health coverage from 42 percent of the population to 50 percent – Cutting the infant mortality rate by 50 percent, the mortality rate for women in childbirth by 50 percent, and the childhood mortality rate by 30 percent – Introduction of a health Information, Education, Communication (IEC) program – Increasing the rate of access to safe drinking water – Combat all diseases, with special emphasis on prevention. 	<p>2000-2005</p> <p>2000-2005</p> <p>2000-2005</p>

Policy area	Objectives / Policies	Strategies and measures	Time frame
(Health policy, concluded)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increasing access to basic health services, particularly by children aged 12 to 23 months and by pregnant women – Improving the quality of services provided – Ensuring an appropriate legislation and regulatory framework for private built care service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Extending health coverage in order to achieve the objective of 55 percent of the population within five kilometers of a health post by 2005 – Rationalizing the management of human and financial resources – Improving the training of personnel – Adopting consistent standards – Improving the availability of pharmaceutical products and the regular supply of essential medications – Increasing the availability of human, material, and financial resources – Drafting and implementation of regulations governing the provision of health services by the private sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2000-2005 2000-2005 2000-2005 2000-2005 2000-2005

POVERTY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS TO BE MONITORED

	NIGER	Same region/economic group		
		Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income Countries	
	1990/1995	1995/2000	2001	2002
POPULATION				
Total population, mid-year (in millions)				
Growth rate (% of annual average)				
Urban population (as % of total)				
Fertility rate (births per woman)				
INCOMES				
Per capita GNP (US\$)				
Consumer price index (1990= 100)				
Food product price index (1990=100)				
DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME AND CONSUMPTION				
(% of incomes or consumption)				
Poorest quintile				
Wealthiest quintile				
SOCIAL INDICATORS				
Public expenditure				
(% of GDP)				
Health				
Rural sector				
Education				
Social security and public assistance				

Net primary school enrollment ratio

(% of cohort)

Total

Boys

Girls

Literacy rate (boys girls)

Access to drinking water

(% of population)

Total

Urban

Rural

Ratio with sewerage/urban and rural

Health indicators

Health coverage ratio

Health coverage ratio within 5 km of a health post

Frequency of visits to health posts

Immunization rate

(% age cohort under 12 months)

Measles

DPT

Child malnutrition (under age 5)

Life expectancy at birth

(years)

Total

Male

Female

Mortality

Infantile (/1,000 live births)

Under age 5 (/1,000 live births)

Adult (15-59)

Male (/1,000 pop.)

Female (/1,000 pop.)

Maternal (/100,000 live births)

Activity indicators

Total number of gainfully employed
% of males
% of females
Unemployment rate
Female unemployment rate
Male unemployment rate
Youth unemployment rate

Indicators of participation in decision-making process

Total persons engaged in political functions (Parliament, Government and Military Command)
% of males
% of females
Total persons in senior management
% of males
% of females
Total self-employed professionals
% of males
% of females

NB: These indicators will be monitored at the national level. Depending on availability, some may be monitored at the regional or subregional level.

FINANCING REQUIREMENTS FOR PREPARATION OF THE PRSP

(in thousands of CFA francs)

Areas	Activities	Total amount	Financing obtained	Financing sought
1. Improvement of the poverty information system	Assembling existing documentation and data	12,642	-	12,642
	Population census	3,448,200	1,678,233.6*	1,769,966.4
	Preparation of poverty-related maps	60,000	-	60,000
	Establishment and operation of the Poverty Research Institute	525,914	-	525,914
	Household budget and consumption survey	519,835	-	519,835
	Participatory survey on poverty	40,000	40,000*	
	Farm census	4,000,000	665,000*	-
2. Preparation of the final PRSP	Regional analysis	17,630	-	17,630
	Regional and subregional validation workshops	25,035	-	25,035
	National validation workshop	16,574	-	16,574
	Technical assistance for strengthening monitoring and evaluation capabilities	100,000	-	100,000
	Operation of the coordination unit responsible for overseeing preparation of the PRSP	9,600	-	9,600
TOTAL		8,775,430	2,383,233.6	6,392,196.4

Notes:

* The funding obtained for the population census is from the United Nations Development Program, the United Nations Population Fund, and the European Union.

* The funding obtained for the farm census is from the European Union for preparatory work.

* The funding obtained for the participatory survey on poverty is from the UNDP.

Objective/ Activities	Results/ products	Responsible	O 00	N 00	D 00	J 01	F 01	M 01	A 01	M 01	J 01	J 01	A 01	S 01	O 01	N 01	D 01	J 02	F 02	M 02	A 02	M 02
evaluation																						
• Macroeconomic strategy	Macroeconomic framework	MP/MF, civil society, donors, NGOs, sectors																				
• Sectoral strategies: rural development, agriculture, stock farming, education, health, infrastructure, water, energy, etc.	Updated sectoral strategies	MP/MF, civil society, donors, NGOs, sectors																				
• Intersectoral strategies: rural development, urban development, environment, gender, HIV-AIDS, information, etc.	Updated intersectoral strategies	MP/MF, civil society, donors, NGOs, sectors																				
• Institutional strategies: decentralization, community participation, private sector, regional integration, good governance, etc.	Updated institutional strategies	MP/MF, civil society, donors, NGOs, sectors																				
6. Arbitrage between objectives and alignment with the macroeconomic framework and budgetary resources	Draft PRSP	Government																				
7. Dissemination and final validation																						
- Regional and subregional workshops, and National Validation Workshop	Validated strategies and recommendations	Regional and subregional committees, MP/MF, civil society, donors, NGOs, etc																				
8. Production of complete PRSP	Final PRSP	Steering committee																				
9. Presentation of PRSP to Executive Boards of the World Bank and IMF		Government. WB, IMF.																				

N.B.: - A number of the activities planned will continue beyond December 2001, particularly the utilization of the results of the population census, the agricultural census, and the budget and consumption survey. Only the first set of information published will be

used for the PRSP. The final results of these activities will be used in particular for the effective establishment of the data bank on poverty and the monitoring and evaluation system.

- Adherence to this timetable is justified by the government's desire to assemble all the prerequisites necessary to benefit from the effects of the HIPC Initiative within a reasonable period of time, and taking into account the multiple financial constraints facing the country.

Niger. Selected Economic and Financial Indicators, 1997-2003

	1997	1998	1999 Est.	2000	2001	2002	2003
				Projections			
(Annual percentage change, unless otherwise specified)							
National income and prices							
GDP at constant prices	2.8	10.4	-0.6	3.0	3.7	4.1	4.5
GDP deflator	3.1	3.0	2.0	3.5	3.4	3.0	3.0
Consumer price index							
Annual average	2.9	4.5	-2.3	2.9	3.4	3.0	3.0
End of period	4.1	3.4	-1.9	4.1	2.1	3.0	3.0
External sector							
Exports, f.o.b.	2.8	24.2	-9.9	1.2	5.9	5.1	6.2
Imports, f.o.b.	11.7	33.6	-16.5	14.4	6.9	5.2	5.6
Export volume	2.3	14.2	-10.4	0.7	4.2	4.1	4.0
Import volume	2.1	30.7	-21.1	-2.7	6.3	5.8	5.0
Terms of trade (deterioration -)	-7.6	5.8	-5.0	-14.6	1.1	1.6	1.4
Nominal effective exchange rate							
(period average; depreciation -) 1/	-2.2	0.5	-1.6	-2.6
Real effective exchange rate							
(period average; depreciation -) 1/	0.2	2.4	-6.3	-2.4
Government finances							
Total revenue	15.0	19.4	-3.0	2.9	17.7	13.2	14.6
Total expenditure and net lending 2/	28.8	21.0	8.9	-9.2	16.8	8.1	7.9
Current budgetary expenditure	31.2	19.3	11.7	-10.8	11.8	3.7	4.1
Capital expenditure	32.8	25.8	0.7	-4.1	27.5	16.0	13.9
Money and credit							
Domestic credit 3/	10.1	-0.1	6.3	5.9	6.0	6.5	6.8
Credit to the government (net) 3/	6.9	-11.1	7.8	-4.6	0.0	-0.1	-0.1
Credit to the economy	9.1	28.5	-3.0	20.9	10.3	11.0	11.3
Net domestic assets 3/	11.1	1.7	9.1	7.9	6.0	6.5	6.8
Money and quasi money	-1.0	0.7	-5.5	4.2	6.8	8.8	9.9
Interest rate (money market, in percent; end of period) 1/	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
(In percent of GDP, unless otherwise indicated)							
Government finances							
Budgetary revenue	8.4	8.9	8.5	8.2	9.0	9.5	10.1
Current expenditure (commitment basis)	10.5	11.0	12.1	10.1	10.6	10.2	9.9
Capital expenditure (commitment basis)	5.1	5.6	5.6	5.0	6.0	6.5	6.8
Total expenditure (commitment basis) 4/	16.0	17.0	18.2	15.5	16.9	17.0	17.1
Primary budget balance (commitment basis, excl. grants) 5/	-6.0	-6.6	-8.2	-5.7	-5.8	-5.6	-5.2
Basic budget balance (commitment basis, excl. grants) 6/	-3.0	-3.2	-5.6	-3.2	-3.3	-2.6	-1.7
Overall budget balance (commitment basis, excl. grants)	-7.5	-8.1	-9.7	-7.3	-7.9	-7.6	-7.0
Overall budget balance (commitment basis, incl. grants)	-3.0	-2.8	-5.9	-3.4	-4.7	-4.1	-3.3

Niger. Selected Economic and Financial Indicators, 1997-2003 (concluded)

	1997	1998	1999 Est.	2000	2001	2002	2003
				Projections			
(In percent of GDP, unless otherwise indicated)							
Gross domestic investment	10.9	11.3	10.2	10.4	11.8	12.7	13.8
Private	5.1	4.9	3.9	4.7	5.0	5.4	6.0
Public	5.8	6.4	6.4	5.7	6.8	7.4	7.8
Gross national savings	6.5	7.5	7.3	5.4	6.3	7.7	9.6
Gross domestic savings	3.2	2.7	3.8	1.8	2.8	3.8	5.2
Private	2.9	1.5	4.1	0.3	1.1	1.3	1.9
Public	0.3	1.2	-0.3	1.5	1.7	2.4	3.3
Resource gap	7.6	8.6	6.4	8.7	9.0	8.9	8.6
External current account balance							
Excluding official transfers 7/	-10.4	-10.0	-7.6	-10.3	-10.9	-10.5	-9.9
Including official transfers 7/	-4.3	-3.8	-2.9	-5.1	-5.5	-5.0	-4.2
External public debt (end of period) 8/ 9/	92.2	83.1	84.3	87.9	87.4	84.6	81.2
Debt-service ratio in percent of :							
Exports of goods and nonfactor services							
Before debt relief	24.4	23.8	23.2	30.8	36.4	32.8	29.8
Government revenue							
Before debt relief	47.5	47.7	43.7	57.0	61.1	51.7	43.8
(In billions of CFA francs)							
GDP at current market prices	1,077	1,225	1,243	1,325	1,420	1,524	1,640
Government payments arrears (reduction -)	-11.9	7.6	58.4	-129.6	-25.0	-29.2	-35.1
Domestic	-13.8	-1.3	36.9	-14.0	-25.0	-29.2	-35.1
External	1.9	8.9	21.5	-115.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Overall balance of payments 9/	-34.8	-36.4	-43.0	-61.7	-114.8	-104.2	-96.5

1/ Last available data for 2000.

2/ Commitment basis as per payment orders issued.

3/ In percent of beginning-of-period money stock.

4/ Includes current and capital expenditure, as well as expenditure of the special accounts and annexed budgets.

5/ Budget revenue minus expenditure (on a commitment basis), excluding interest payments.

6/ Budget revenue minus expenditure (on a commitment basis), excluding foreign-financed investment projects.

7/ Official transfers include budgetary grants as well as technical assistance and food grants.

8/ Including obligations to the IMF.

9/ Before debt relief.

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