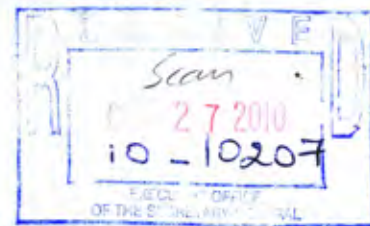


Niger

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Note to the Secretary-General

MISSION TO NIGER, 14-16 October 2010 ✓

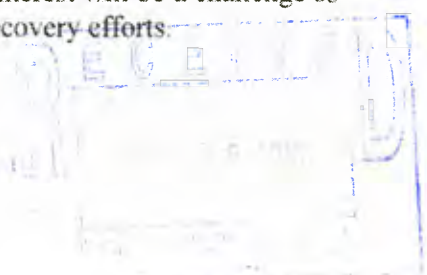
1. The principal objectives of my visit were to: assess the humanitarian response to the food and nutrition crisis that affected over 7 million people earlier this year; discuss ways of preventing the recurrence of this type of crisis; and strengthen partnerships with national stakeholders and development actors. My mission coincided with World Food Day, which provided an opportunity for me to reinforce the need for a multi-sectoral approach to addressing the root causes of food insecurity as well as the importance of working with communities for them to be better prepared for these predictable crises that affect the most vulnerable. The challenges facing Niger are significant. Its population doubles every 21 years, meaning that the current population of 15.2 million is forecast to reach 50 million by 2050. This high population growth rate combined with extremely poor development indicators, extreme levels of poverty, high levels of malnutrition and illiteracy, poor infrastructure and weak governance have all contributed to Niger's vulnerability.

27/10/10

2. In Niamey, I met President Djibo, the Head of the Conseil National pour la Restauration de la Démocratie; Prime Minister Danda and a number of his Ministers; Member State and donor representatives; UN agencies and international NGOs. I also met with the ad hoc committee established to respond to the flooding in Niamey and toured the parts of the city affected by recent heavy rains. I then travelled to Zinder and Diffa, two of the country's most affected regions during the crisis. I visited feeding centres and spoke to local authorities and residents who shared their concerns and experiences. Clearly, the massive humanitarian intervention that was undertaken in partnership with national and international actors helped mitigate the severity of the food crisis. However, there are still concerns about the level of malnutrition across the country. On a positive note, this year's harvest is expected to be quite good compared to recent years.

3. The key issue for the UN will be to sustain these positive trends and prevent recurring cycles of crisis affecting Niger and the Sahel. Its root causes are deeply structural and require integration of food security and nutritional dimensions into longer-term recovery and development plans. Addressing gender inequalities will be a critical requirement for lifting the country out of poverty and tackling severe underdevelopment.

4. In the immediate and medium terms, there is a need to continue responding to the existing acute vulnerabilities, particularly in the areas of food, nutrition and health. Additional support to pastoralists and flood-affected communities to help them quickly recover their losses will be required to mitigate the lingering effects of the crisis. These requirements will be delineated in the 2011 humanitarian appeal for Niger. While the 2010 appeal was relatively well-funded, maintaining donor interest will be a challenge so I will continue to call on donors to support these relief and recovery efforts.





Note to Mr. Nambiar

Mission to Niger

Please find attached a note to the Secretary-General informing him of the outcome of my mission from Niger from 14 to 16 October 2010.

I would be grateful if you could kindly submit it to the Secretary-General.

Valerie Amos
27 October 2010

Note to the Secretary-General



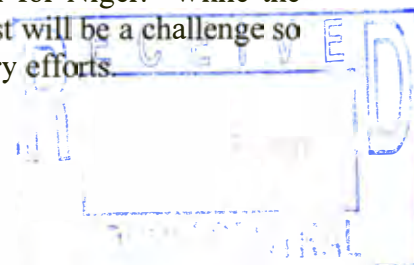
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5. The good collaboration between the Government and humanitarian partners contributed greatly to averting this year's food crisis. Unlike the previous government's reluctance to acknowledge the severity of the humanitarian situation, the transitional government has realised the need to take action and to link the emergency phase with longer-term development actions. The government has announced its intention to host an international conference on food security early next year and hopes to attract high-level participants to discuss these issues.

6. The role of local and national authorities as well as regional bodies is critical to address immediate and longer-term issues. I am therefore concerned with how recent gains will be sustained beyond the transitional government and next year's election. The political context is extremely fragile. While I was in Niger, three members of the government were reportedly arrested for plotting a coup. The donors in Niamey were keen to see a quick and peaceful transition to democracy to allow a full restart of their development programmes. It is unclear if the likely presidential candidates will commit to acknowledging these humanitarian and development challenges and maintain the needed focus on these issues to maintain progress.

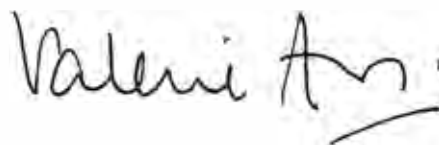
7. Strengthening local capacities to prepare and respond to crises as well as to tackle development challenges will help avoid a culture of dependency in Niger. Concerted efforts need to be made to address the structural issues already outlined. Importantly, the cyclical climate effects on Niger are predictable so improving preparedness must also be prioritised along with confronting the root causes of Niger's extreme vulnerability. Across the Sahel region, these current trends are simply unsustainable.

8. I welcome UNDP's plans to deploy an Early Recovery Advisor soon to support the RC/HC to assist the Government and UNCT to develop a recovery strategy for Niger. The need for a strategic approach at the country level across relevant sectors is apparent. There is also a need to look again at the way the cross-border dimensions of this issue are addressed to ensure proper engagement with regional actors and move from planning and programming to implementation.

9. Security is likely to remain another challenge to implementing humanitarian and development programmes in Niger, especially in the Agadez region. President Djibo admitted this reality and revealed the creation of an interdepartmental unit within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that will review how security can be improved.

10. Overall, I hope this visit has brought attention back on Niger at a critical time in its recovery to highlight the necessary links between immediate and longer-term development needs. I delivered these messages from Niger to donors and the media as I continued my mission in Europe. I hope to brief Member States. I will chair an ECHA discussion on Niger and will work closely with UN partners to ensure support to the UN team in Niamey as well as to a coherent regional approach that includes mapping existing

capacities and gaps in food security and nutrition and the updating of national contingency plans.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Valerie Amos', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Valerie Amos
26 October 2010

cc: Ms. Clark
Mr. Diouf
Mr. Djinnit
Ms. Obaid
Mr. Lake
Mr. Pascoe
Ms. Sheeran
Mr. Starr
Mr. Nabarro

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