

Handwritten note in red ink at the top right of the page.

Dear Chris

Note to Mr. Coleman

Sahel region

I refer to the mission report of Mr. Egeland to the Sahel region, which you transmitted to Mr. Nambiar through Mr. Pascoe on 12 June.

I note that in his report, Mr. Egeland writes that the President of Niger, Mr. Mamadou Tandja, "did not see a need for increased dialogue" with Touaregs. Mr. Egeland also recommends further engagement of mediation experts both in Mali and in Niger.

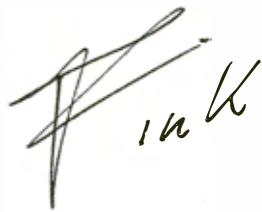
This is echoed in Mr. Djinnit's cable on his recent mission to Mali and Niger (dated respectively 14 and 16 June). From Mali, Mr. Djinnit reiterates the commitment expressed to him by officials to engage in dialogue and their appreciation of the Algerian mediation efforts. From Niger, he reports that President Tandja "is ready to discuss with the MNJ once it has disarmed within a Nigerien framework and without international mediation". Mr. Djinnit notes support within the National Assembly and civil society for dialogue with the Touaregs.

Prior to these two missions, upon return of Mr. Menkerios from the region, Mr. Pascoe had reported that Niger would be receptive to the use of the Secretary-General's good offices to help bring the two sides to the negotiation table and had recommended the immediate appointment of a special envoy for Niger (note of 28 May and 6 June).

While those three missions have some common findings, they also seem to contradict each other on some key aspects, notably the willingness of the Government of Niger to engage in UN-mediated discussions with the Touaregs. The need to address the Touareg question as a regional issue also involving Mali does not seem to meet the agreement of all DPA officials either.

I would be grateful if you could help us understand what is the consolidated DPA perspective on how to address the Touareg question and whether the TOR of the special envoy for Niger should be revised.

Many thanks,



Nicholas Haysom
17 June 2008

Note to the Secretary-General

Mission to the Sahel Region

1) I have just completed a mission on your behalf, to Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger in the Sahel. I traveled with representatives of the Department of Political Affairs; the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and the United Nations Environment Program, as well as an associate of Mr. Jeffrey Sachs, your Special Advisor on the Millennium Development Goals. The mission was warmly received by the governments concerned, donors and the United Nations Country Teams. The complex logistics of the extensive field travel were greatly facilitated by the support of the Resident Coordinators, the United Nations Development Program, the United Nations Office for West Africa, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Department of Public Information and the Department of Field Support.

2) The purpose of this mission was to focus attention on the inter-relationship between climate change and conflict prevention. The signs of relentless climate change were visible wherever we traveled including the huge dried-up Lake Faguibine (Mali) and Lake Chad (visited via Niger) as well as dwindling water resources of the Niger River, and dried-up wells where there had been water for generations. The reason for this catastrophic environmental degradation are three-fold:

- (a) Climate change leading to less and more erratic rainfall
- (b) Deforestation and desertification filling waterways with dirt and sand.
- (c) Rapid population growth leading to unsustainable water usage.

The Millennium Development Goals can in no way be achieved in this region unless the above trends are effectively addressed.

3) The governments in all three countries were complimentary of United Nations support and your leadership on the climate change issue. The President of Mali, Mr. Amadou Toumani Toure, is organizing a conference for seven countries (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger) to discuss security and stability in the region. I have spoken with your Special Representative in West Africa, Mr. Said Djinnit in this regard. President Toure was very interested in UN and other support for conflict resolution and reconciliation efforts including in the conflicts with Tuareg pastoralists. He also wanted UN support for funding a channel being built from the Niger River to refill Lake Faguibine upon which large and vulnerable communities rely.

4) The President of Niger, Mr. Mamadou Tandja, wanted stronger United Nations support for on-going efforts to reverse desertification and environmental degradation as well as for a joint project among Lake Chad basin countries to transfer water from the Congo River to refill the lake. President Tandja, as opposed to his colleague in Mali, did not see a need for increased dialogue with pastoralists

or other marginalized groups in light of climate change. “The only problem is banditry due to drugs and arms trafficking”. He asked the United Nations to fight this problem and end poverty, adding that there was too much talk and too little action by the international community.

5) Conclusions:

- (a) The United Nations should step-up advocacy for greatly increased investment in climate change adaptation in the Sahel and other “frontline” regions in the build-up to the Copenhagen conference in December 2009. The donors must give equal attention to mitigation and adaptation, and the United Nations should champion the industrialized world’s obligation to greatly invest in adaptation in the Sahel and other vulnerable regions of the South.
- (b) The United Nations, including the Country Teams and respective Agencies, Funds and Programs, should give increased attention and assistance to the extremely vulnerable pastoralist societies in the Sahel. This is not only life-saving development investment, but also conflict prevention.
- (c) The Department of Political Affairs and Special Representative Djinnit should consider deploying the Standby Team of mediation experts to work with the Country Teams of Mali and Niger, which are already involved in local conflict resolution efforts (as are Non-Governmental Organizations like Norwegian Church Aid in northern Mali).

6) I will work with colleagues in the Department of Political Affairs, the United Nations Environmental Program, the Resident Coordinators, and your Special Advisor on Millennium Development Goals, to do follow-up for this mission and raise donor interest.

Jan Egeland
10 June 2008

cc: Mr. Pascoe
Mr. Holmes
Mr. Akasaka
Mr. Melkert
Mr. Steiner
Mr. Djinnit
Mr. Menkerios
Mr. Sachs

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Note to the Secretary-General

Mission to the Sahel Region

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DPA/ONSG/08-01664

ROUTING SLIP		FICHE DE TRANSMISSION
TO: A: Mr. Nambiar, Chef de Cabinet, EOSG		
THROUGH: Mr. B. Lynn Pascoe		
FROM: DE: Mr. Christopher Coleman, Chief, PPU/MSU/DPA		
Room No. – No de bureau: 3755A	Ext: 3-8222	Date: 11 June 2008
FOR ACTION		POUR SUITE A DONNER
FOR APPROVAL		POUR APPROBATION
FOR SIGNATURE		POUR SIGNATURE
FOR COMMENTS		POUR OBSERVATIONS
MAY WE DISCUSS?		POURRIONS-NOUS EN PARLER?
YOUR ATTENTION		VOTRE ATTENTION
AS DISCUSSED		COMME CONVENU
AS REQUESTED		SUITE A VOTRE DEMANDE
RETURN		RETOURNER
FOR INFORMATION	X	POUR INFORMATION

Please find attached, for the information of the Secretary-General, a note on Special Advisor Egeland's recent mission to the Sahel.

Best regards

Drafter: Mr. Peter Barwick, MSU/DPA

cc: Mr. Buo

OUTGOING CABLE

CDX 50 - Page 1 of 3
UNITED NATIONS
COMM CENTRE

03 JUN 14 19 18

TO: PASCOE, UNATIONS, NEW YORK

FROM: DJINNIT, UNOWA, DAKAR

DATE: 14 JUNE 2008

NUMBER: CDX - 050

SUBJECT: Mission to Mali

1. On 9 and 10 June, I undertook a mission to Mali to meet with officials and exchange views on the challenges facing the country and the subregion. Prior to my visit, I had a telephone conversation with Jan Egeland who briefed me on his recent trip to the region.

2. During this visit, I met with President Amadou Toumani Touré, Prime Minister Modibo Sidibé, and other members of the Government including the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Internal Security and Civil Protection, Territorial Administration and Local Communities, as well as the President and Vice President of the National Assembly. I also held consultations with the American and French Ambassadors and the UN Country Team. Our discussions focused on socio-economic and development challenges, efforts to consolidate good governance and democratization, security in the Kidal region, and instability in the Sahelian band.

Socio-economic and development challenges

3. My interlocutors confirmed Mali's complex socio-economic challenges, ranging from low agriculture output to limited investment capacities. While no demonstrations have been reported, the country has been seriously affected by the current food crisis. Emergency measures implemented by the Government have alleviated the burden on the population, but have also drained the country's limited financial resources. I was informed that Mali devotes more than 15% of its budget to agriculture and is seeking to achieve self-sufficiency by 2012. Programmes are also in place for increasing rice production to meet the demands of Mali and the subregion.

4. Discussions with development partners and the diplomatic community highlighted deficiencies in Mali's educational system and its limited capacity to improve educational infrastructure. I was briefed by Government officials including the President himself on the on-going difficulties faced in the education sector and efforts deployed to ensure that the current annual school year is not lost.

Good governance and democratization

5. Most of my interlocutors affirmed Mali's progress in strengthening democracy and good governance practices, and referred to an existing vibrant civil society and respect for freedom of the press. They stressed that there was a need to strengthen the country's democratic institutions by taking additional measures, such as adopting laws for financing political parties and according a formal status to the opposition. The opposition is considered by some observers as being weak, particularly in view of the strong consensus behind the President's programmes.

Security in the Kidal region

6. Government officials pointed out that with the ongoing implementation of the 2006 Algiers Accord, there was no pretext for resurgence of the 1990s rebellion. They also questioned the motivation of rebel leader Ag Bahanga in mounting his recent offensive. In view of the demands he has made, including the withdrawal of the army from northern areas such as in Tinzaouten, they believe he is seeking to protect his illicit activities. The Government is of the view that out of the 18 tasks to be completed as part of the agreement, all have been realized except three which are being undertaken. However, from my discussions with others, there were some discrepancies on the extent to which certain provisions have been implemented, particularly with regard to the establishment of special security units to be essentially composed of locally-recruited people and the reintegration of former combatants.

7. The Government expressed deep concern over growing criminality in the north, especially the emergence of drug and arms trafficking, and the use of landmines, in the face of the State's weak capacity. Despite the recent resort to military action, Malian officials reaffirmed their commitment to engage in dialogue and seek a peaceful solution to the conflict. To this end, the resumption of Algeria's mediation efforts was welcomed as providing the appropriate framework for pursuing the peace process.

8. Regarding the recent reported Tuareg refugee flow to Burkina Faso, the Malian Government is not yet convinced that they are genuine refugees in view of the fact that their exact number and place of origin have yet to be established. They do not exclude that this movement was the result of some manipulation. However, they have indicated their willingness to assume full responsibility for the repatriation of Malian refugees at any time. Initial reports from the regional representation of UNHCR also raise the same doubts regarding the origin of this movement.

Insecurity and instability in the Sahelian band

9. Most of my interlocutors expressed concern over the fact that the Sahelian band is facing an increase in cross-border crime, including the trafficking of drugs

and weapons. There was strong support for a concerted and subregional approach to address instability in the area. The proposed regional conference on the Sahel (tentatively scheduled for early July in Bamako), will now be limited to seven States exclusively: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Libya, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, all of which have confirmed their participation, according to the Malian authorities. Assistance from ECOWAS and the UN will be solicited if needed in due course. The summit's objective is for the participating Heads of State to agree on a joint approach and strategy on the regional security situation that could be translated into concrete action.

UNCT meetings

10. My exchanges with the UN Country Team in Bamako focused on current projects aimed at helping Mali. I was informed of the constraints faced by the UN in terms of humanitarian access to the Kidal area which has affected development projects. During my visit, I also met and shared view with the UNDP Associate Administrator, Mr. Ad Melkert, who was in Bamako to attend a donors' conference, co-chaired by UNDP and the Government, held on 12 and 13 June.

Observations:

- (i) It is clear that the States most affected by insecurity in the Sahelian band intend to proceed with the high-level regional conference without ECOWAS and UN assistance, contrary to what was initially envisaged. Support from both organizations may, however, be solicited for implementing the plan of action that would be agreed upon by the participants, including the convening of a regional conference on drug trafficking and other cross-border crime. UNOWA intends to play a role in liaison with ECOWAS with a view to converging ongoing parallel initiatives on this issue (Niger and ECOWAS), and ensuring technical preparation with the support of UNODC and UNOGBIS.
- (ii) President Toumani Touré reaffirmed that, despite the recent escalation in military activity, he remains fully committed to pursuing a peaceful political solution to the security situation in Kida region. He indicated that except unity and territorial integrity all other matters can be discussed.
- (iii) The recent upsurge in rebel activities in Kidal has developed against the backdrop of a dramatic increase in cross-border organized crime, especially drug and human trafficking, and the movement of terrorist groups. This has created some confusion on possible linkages between the activities of various groups in the area.
- (iv) There is a need to address the ongoing controversy over the Malian refugees in Ouagadougou to avoid further misunderstanding between the two countries.

Best regards.

CDX 051 - Page 1 of 4

OUTGOING CODE CABLE**TO:** PASCOE, UNATIONS, NEW YORK**FROM:** DJINNIT, UNOWA, DAKAR**DATE:** 16 June 2008**NUMBER:** CDX 051**SUBJECT:** Mission to NigerUNITED NATIONS HQS
COMM CENTRE

08 JUN 16 12 16

1. On 11 and 12 June, I undertook a mission to Niger to consult with authorities on developments in the country and the sub-region. I met with President Mamadou Tandja, Prime Minister Seyni Oumarou and other members of Government including the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Interior as well as Mr. Brigi Rafini, Fourth Vice President of the National Assembly, who is also Mayor of Iferouane (the epicentre of insecurity in the Agadez region), Mr. Mohamed Anacko, High Commissioner for the Restoration of Peace and Mr. Mai Moctar Kassouma, President of the National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illicit Arms. Meetings were also held with the diplomatic corps as well as separate consultations with the American and French Ambassadors, the UN Country Team and civil society, including women's associations.

2. Discussions focused on socio-economic and development challenges; efforts to consolidate good governance and democratization; security in the north of Niger; and instability in the Sahelian band.

Socio-economic and development challenges

3. I was informed that despite continued problems, the overall food situation has improved. The government has various programmes to ensure adequate and timely responses to food insecurity as well as longer-term projects, particularly to develop irrigation. However, the rising price of basic commodities has brought on a new dimension to food insecurity in the country. Ongoing UN projects are aimed at helping Niger implement its poverty reduction strategy. The President stated that although it was not easy, slow progress was being made in tackling Niger's economic challenges.

4. The economic situation is more difficult in the north as increased insecurity has limited humanitarian and development access to the region. While most actors have left the region, the UN system has maintained a presence in Agadez. On 12

June, I accompanied government officials and UN representatives on the inaugural UN flight to Agadez. This flight will largely help in facilitating humanitarian and development assistance throughout the country and beyond.

Good governance and democratization

5. Most government officials stressed the importance Niger places on respect for human rights and the rule of law. They equally underlined progress in consolidating democratic rule and good governance. Women's associations praised the President for his engagement with civil society and commitment to women's empowerment. However, they expressed concern that Niger ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) but with serious reservations and it has yet to ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. Some Government officials lamented the biased depictions by international media of Niger which had tarnished the image of the country.

6. Elections were also the focus of many discussions. In a move to save on cost-efficiency, a recently adopted law extended the terms of municipal representatives for an additional year so that all elections could be held in the same electoral period. I was informed that preparations were underway for the electoral calendar which will see municipal elections in June-July 2009, and legislative and presidential elections in November-December 2009. Government officials stated that the electoral census will begin on 19 June.

7. In response to my question, President Tandja requested me to assure the UN that the Nigerien Government would abide by the electoral calendar and the two-term limit of the presidential mandate as prescribed in the constitution.

8. Some civil society representatives expressed concern that difficulties the census could face in the north and insufficient funding could be used by the Government to postpone the elections. The UNCT equally advised that funding gaps might have implications on the electoral process. When I raised this concern with the Minister of Interior, he clearly stated that parliamentary and presidential elections would be held on schedule even if the electoral list, currently being updated, is not finalized. He also confirmed that the Government would fill all funding gaps.

Security in the north

9. President Tandja reiterated his unambiguous position on the situation in the north, underlining that the Mouvement des Nigériens pour la Justice (MNJ) is not a rebel movement, as the rebellion issue was addressed in the peace agreements of

1995 and 1997. The President is ready to discuss directly with the MNJ once it has disarmed within a Nigerien framework and without international mediation. He added that the group has to do with organized crime and drug trafficking, which have emerged as the main cause of insecurity in the Sahelian band.

10. I was informed by other interlocutors, including Mr. Rafini and Mr. Anacko of an ongoing initiative by dignitaries from the Agadez region to create conditions for dialogue between the Government and the armed group. A committee led by Mr. Rafini was established to bring the two sides together within the framework of the President's vision. Mr. Rafini admitted that it will be difficult to convince the MNJ to disarm before meeting with the President. Mr. Rafini and Mr. Anacko insisted on the urgency of finding a peaceful resolution to the issue as it risks becoming more complicated. On a more positive note, Mr. Rafini welcomed the fact that the President accepted the appeal not to call the MNJ "bandits", thus creating psychological conditions for engagement. On 12 June, Mr. Rafini left for a week long mission to the north as emissary to engage the MNJ leadership based on the President's position.

11. I expressed to all my interlocutors the readiness of the UN to support efforts aimed at facilitating dialogue and restoring confidence.

Instability in the Sahelian band

12. My interlocutors were extremely concerned over the rise of trafficking and the growing strength of criminal groups in the Sahelian band, which they considered the main threat to stability in the countries of the region. As an attestation of the importance it places on trafficking in the Sahel, Niger decided to convene a regional conference to agree on a set of concrete actions to combat the scourge in a decisive and concrete manner. Preparations for this initiative began as early as September 2007. In view of the pending regional summit on the Sahel scheduled for July, Nigerien authorities have postponed their conference until September. I commended Nigerien officials for their commitment to the issue and offered UN assistance in order to help achieve expected results and reinforce a collective and regional approach. UN support was warmly welcomed.

Observations:

(i) Regarding the elections, despite concerns raised by some civil society representatives and diplomatic circles, the Government at all levels stands firm in its commitment to the electoral process, insisting that the elections will be held on schedule and in accordance with constitutional provisions. Niger attaches great importance to breaking from past images of instability and developing democratic institutions and good governance. I am pleased to note that the UN system in

Niger is working together to support the country's electoral process. My visit coincided with a UN electoral needs assessment mission.

(ii) On the issue of insecurity in the north, President Tandja maintains his well-known firm position. However, from my discussions, I noticed that there is clear support within the National Assembly and civil society for a peaceful solution through dialogue and not military action. Building on a slight evolution perceived in the President's position, Mr. Rafini encouraged the international community, including the UN, to deploy efforts to convince the President to soften his position.

(iii) In seeking to convince the President to be more flexible, recourse should be made to personalities within the ECOWAS subregion or beyond who have proven leverage or influence over the President. As well, emphasis should be placed on the President's well appreciated contribution to the democratization process in Niger which will be undermined if he does not resolve the situation in the north before his departure from office. Attention should also be given to the fact that some forces might be opposed to dialogue.

(iv) National Assembly and civil society representatives insisted that a solution to the situation in the north must be sought rapidly, as a delay could complicate matters further. Already, there is the emergence of a breakaway rebel group. There is the risk that the position of dignitaries from the Agadez region who have thus far been involved in crucial reconciliation efforts between the two sides becomes untenable. Their credibility and relevance could be lost, thus depriving the process of this crucial channel of communication between the two sides.

(v) Prior to my visit to Niger, I received a communication from Mr. Aghali Alambo, President of the MNJ, who requested to speak with me. I managed to get in touch with him upon my return to Dakar. I will convey the outcome of my discussions in a separate code cable.

Best regards.

ONLY

CDX 053 - Page 1 of 1

● OUTGOING CODE CABLE

TO: PASCOE, UNATIONS, NEW YORK
FROM: DJINNIT, UNOWA, DAKAR
DATE: 16 June 2008
NUMBER: CDX 053

ConfidentialUNITED NATIONS HQS
COMM. CENTRE
00 JUN 16 13 12**SUBJECT: Contact with MNJ**

1. I refer to my code cable CDX 051 on my recent visit to Niger. On 5 June 2008, I received a communication from Mr. Aghali Alambo, President of the Mouvement des Nigériens pour la Justice (MNJ), proposing that we have a telephone conversation on the situation in the Agadez region of northern Niger. I made contact with Mr. Alambo on 15 June upon my return from Niger.

2. Mr. Alambo stated the position of his movement as generally portrayed in its public statements. He stressed the fact that the MNJ is not asking for impossible demands. He categorically rejected accusations by the Government of the MNJ's linkages with drug trafficking. He stressed the fact that his movement is willing to join efforts towards fighting drug trafficking in the region as it seriously erodes the region's culture and spoils youth, particularly given the high unemployment rate. To the contrary, he stated that it was corrupt national authorities in the region who were involved in drug trafficking.

3. Mr. Alambo reiterated his position in favor of dialogue. He stated that there is no military solution to the problem in either the short or long term. The sooner both parties can sit to discuss the better.

4. When I asked him about his position on the President's conditions for dialogue, he stated that the MNJ would lose its credibility if it were to disarm before negotiating. Nonetheless, he confirmed his movement's willingness to consider other options such as a truce or a cessation of hostilities in order to create conditions for dialogue. He also indicated that the MNJ is willing to return to dialogue at any time in the presence of a neutral mediator.

5. We agreed to remain in touch.

Best regards.