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**AFRICAN SYMPOSIUM ON DEVELOPMENT**

(Paper submitted by the Government  
of the Republic of the Niger)

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## I. GENERAL THEME OF THE SYMPOSIUM

More than 25 years after independence, Africa is still in search for ways and means of improving conditions of life of its peoples and laying foundation for an original and a self-supporting development.

All the same, access to basic development however legitimate it may be, becomes more and more difficult or even compromised by the present world economic crisis and its disastrous consequences on the less developed countries.

Almost in all these countries, the situation is indeed marked by the combination of a serious economic recession and a disturbing degradation of the natural environment.

This situation constitutes a major challenge which necessitates a new more dynamic developmental approach.

The African countries and the international community are very much concerned about the economic and social crisis which affects Africa. This crisis compromises the African development process, and the very survival of millions of Africans. The economic crisis which is persisting in Africa, worsened by the drought and desertification, as well the tragic hunger and famine, which have recently reared their heads, have strengthened the conviction of Africans to the need to take, individually and collectively, concerted and immediate measures aimed at ensuring long- and short-term sustained economic and social development of their countries.

This is the reason for the action initiated by the Heads of State and Government of OAU, action that has resulted in the elaboration of APPER and the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (1986-1990).

Africa should, consequently, find ways and means of executing this action.

Generally, we observe in our previous plannings and social and economic development programmes a prevalence of macro-economic objectives. Now, it is important to stress the generalized tendency in many African States to promote the grass root development through a policy of small-scale projects which link the research for food self-sufficiency and involvement at various levels, development plans aimed at involving the "grass root level communities" specially the rural community, women, etc.

But, what lessons shall we draw from this situation at the continental and world level to enable us to engage in a resolute and concerted policy aimed at strengthening our basic developmental choices involving the participation of everybody?

How do we envisage mass involvement in the future? In order to analyse and make positive responses to such preoccupation and questions, the Niger proposes to organize from 8 to 14 June 1987, under the auspices of the National

Council of Development (CND), a symposium on evaluation and projection of political practices, concepts and notions generally included in the themes "basic development", "community development".

## II. OBJECTIVES

### (a) General framework

- (i) evaluation of basic development experiences in each of the countries represented in their present state by stressing the success achieved, the weaknesses recorded and the obstacles encountered;
- (ii) assessment of the prospects envisaged by each of our States as far as basic development is concerned;
- (iii) working out a framework for the designing and the implementation of the recommendations of APPER and the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development;
- (iv) identifying the relevant parameters for the implementation of a national development policy taking into consideration and in a direct manner the grass root communities as producers and beneficiaries.

### (b) Specific framework

- (i) definition of the orientations towards a new type of development and working out the process and the conditions of its implementation;
- (ii) finding out a co-ordination system at local, national, regional and subregional levels and setting up a basic follow-up development network by organizing periodic meetings.

## III. ORGANIZATION

The Niamey Symposium shall be opened to:

- (a) National participants from all African States;
- (b) Leading scientists in the relevant fields;
- (c) Representatives of research institutions in the field of basic development in Africa, Asia and Latin America with the view of enabling us to benefit from the wide experiences of these regions in our search for solutions to our development problems.