

I might add that during talks with the Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Pierre Elliot Trudeau expressed to me his admiration for the determination of the people of Niger to move ahead in economic and social development. This occasion gives me the welcome opportunity to say how much your unswerving will and enthusiasm has impressed the Canadian Government. The official relations between our two governments and the individual contacts that are being forged between our two peoples at an increasing rate are proof of the friendship that is developing between our nations. I should like to review with you for a few minutes the principal stages in the growth of this friendship.

On the official level, to begin with, I note that 1972 marks the 10th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries. Shortly thereafter, we made a modest beginning to our aid program with the arrival in Canada of students from Niger and the arrival here of the first Canadian volunteers. At that time Niger seemed to most a far off country, little known to Canadians. It was not until 1967 that our relations were truly launched through Niger's participation - in reply to our invitation - in the celebrations marking the 100th anniversary of Canadian Confederation. The active part which Niger took in Expo '67 in Montreal, and your presence there, Mr. President, for the Nigerien Day, enabled thousands of Canadians to get to learn about the people of Niger and to increase those first contacts established by Nigerien students who had come to Canada to continue their studies.