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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 18, 1969VISIT OF PRESIDENT DIORI HAMANI

At the invitation of the Governor General, President Diori Hamani of the Republic of Niger arrived in Ottawa on September 17 for a state visit to Canada. During his stay, which will last until September 29, the President will visit Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. He is accompanied by his wife, and his entourage includes Messrs. Mamoudou Maidah, Minister of Rural Economy, Zakara Mouddour, Minister of Saharan and Nomad Affairs, the Post Office and Telecommunications, Abdou Sidikou, Secretary of State to the President with responsibility for foreign affairs, Colonel Balarabe, Chief of Staff of Niger's armed forces, His Excellency Amadou Mayaki, Niger's Ambassador to Canada, and other dignitaries.

President Diori Hamani was met at the airport by His Excellency Roland Michener, Governor General of Canada, whose guest he is while in Ottawa. Discussions between the President, the Prime Minister and other members of the Canadian Government have touched on major topics of current international significance. The President and the Prime Minister have expressed their Governments' determination to continue to contribute by all means within their power to the search for solutions to the problems of world peace. They gave particular emphasis to the fundamental importance of a sustained effort to reduce economic disparities at the international level. They discussed recent developments in Nigeria, and agreed on the need to continue their efforts to get negotiations started.

These conversations also provided an opportunity for a fruitful exchange of views on la Francophonie. The President and the Prime Minister stressed the importance of a rapid expansion in cooperation between French-speaking countries to meet the strongly felt needs of countries which, like Canada and Niger, have a common heritage of French lin-

guistic and cultural traditions; the establishment of a functional framework within which cultural and technical cooperation could quickly attain their full potential was cited as a means to this end.

In this connection, the President and the Prime Minister expressed satisfaction with the decisive steps taken by the French-speaking countries at the conference convened in Niamey last February by President Diouri Hamani, in his capacity as chairman of the "Organisation Commune Africaine et Malgache" (OCAI). Niger and Canada reaffirmed their full support for the proposed Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation between French-speaking Countries, which was approved unanimously at the Niamey conference. The President and the Prime Minister noted their agreement in principle on the role of the Agency and its relations with their respective countries.

They also dealt with questions of economic and social development, a subject in which both countries have a profound interest. The Canadian program of aid to Niger has now been in existence for over five years. The Prime Minister expressed once again his Government's desire to increase Canadian participation in the economic development of Niger, as evidenced by, among other things, the technical cooperation agreement and the three conventions for financing signed today in Ottawa by the President and the Prime Minister. These conventions concern the following projects:

- 1) the enlarging of Mariama College in Niamey and the sending of professors to the college;
- 2) mining prospecting in Niger;
- 3) plant protection, including construction of laboratories, furnishing of equipment, sending experts and granting of scholarships.

The President and the Prime Minister agreed on other subjects of cooperation. In particular, the Canadian Government has undertaken to place advisors at Niger's disposal and to supply food and pharmaceutical products. Canada has also undertaken a technical study of the campaign against endemic diseases.

Other development projects have been studied seriously. Niger is completing a study of the "W" dam, a far reaching project. Once the feasibility of this project is established, Canada contemplates supporting Niger's

approaches to the various organizations which might assure the financing of the project and participating with them in its execution. In other respects, Canada is interested in the transportation problems facing Niger, for example the construction of the "highway of unity" and the improvement of the transport system towards the sea, and foresees a joint effort by the two countries in this field. The President and the Prime Minister also examined a project for establishing a regional bilingual institute at Niamey.

The President invited the Canadian Prime Minister to visit Niger in the near future.

The Prime Minister took pleasure in emphasizing the importance of President Diiori Hamani's visit which would give millions of Canadians an opportunity to learn more about Niger as a key country in the heart of the African continent.