

# United Nations Nations Unies

HEADQUARTERS • SIEGE NEW YORK, NY 10017  
TEL.: 1 (212) 963.1234 • FAX: 1 (212) 963.4879

6 August 2015

Dear Mr. Ndiaye,

I am pleased to inform you that the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) has approved the Niger Peacebuilding Priority Plan, which you submitted on 20 July 2015, in the amount of \$10 million. This amount includes the existing budget for the PBF Secretariat of \$610,863, approved by PBSO in February 2015, and an additional budget for the Priority Plan of **\$9,389,137**.

In making this decision, PBSO acknowledged the efforts by the Government of Niger to consolidate its political transition, and respond to threats to peace and stability in Niger associated with regional conflict dynamics, high numbers of at-risk youths, poverty and lack of economic opportunities and the growing problems of radicalization and border insecurity. In approving the Priority Plan, PBSO also hopes to see the targeting of and support to youth as a common theme through the three strategic outcomes of the Plan.

The reduced Priority Plan allocation takes into account the current low liquidity levels of the Fund and is aimed at encouraging the UN Country Team and the Government to expedite the projectization and implementation of the Plan. Should the current allocation be programmed expeditiously and show early peacebuilding results, our office will be pleased to re-consider Niger's needs in a year's time and potentially increase the amount approved. At the same time, given the urgency of the needs in Niger, we expect to see the full amount of the Priority Plan programmed as approved projects within a maximum period of six months from the receipt of this letter, the failure of which may result in the unprogrammed component being reconsidered.

Annexed to this letter are some more specific recommendations that we would appreciate be considered and addressed by the UN Country Office and the Government partners as part of the upcoming projectization process. Given the reduction in the approved Priority Plan budget to \$10 million, the Joint Steering Committee should advise PBSO on the new allocation between the outcomes areas, at its earliest convenience.

The PBF funds will be made available through the designated UN agencies once projects are approved by the Niger Joint Steering Committee. All approved projects must be in line with the PBF Guidelines and the Priority Plan itself, implementing its three Outcomes, and must not exceed the total funding available. The

Mr. Fode Ndiaye,

UN Resident Coordinator in Niger, Niamey

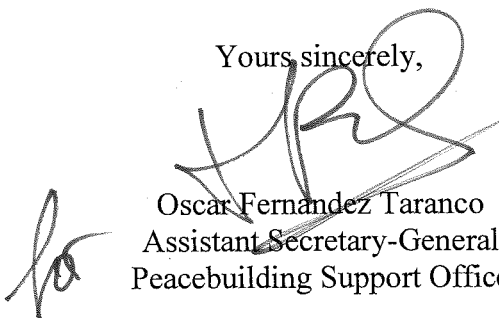
Joint Steering Committee is responsible for the quality assurance, approval and oversight of the PBF funded projects, as well as their ultimate results. As part of its oversight responsibilities, the Committee will need to review project progress and, with the assistance of the Secretariat, to submit an annual report to PBSO with regards to the implementation of the Priority Plan, due annually on 1 December. The Joint Steering Committee will also need to be involved in three independent reflection moments, which are part of the PBF Guidelines and supported by our office: (i) an evaluability assessment of the Priority Plan and the projects, undertaken around 6-9 months from project approval; (ii) a mid-term review, undertaken just after a half-way mark of the projects; and (iii) an independent evaluation undertaken at the end of the Priority Plan.

I further propose that the projectization phase should include an early support mission from PBSO to provide further guidance for the development of projects in line with the annexed recommendations. Given the complexities of the context and the innovative and ambitious nature of the Priority Plan, we recommend to the Country Team to draw on both remote and mission support from the relevant UN Headquarters and regional offices, especially in the areas of gender, youth engagement and natural resource management.

I would appreciate it if your office could kindly forward our message of support to Colonel Major Mahamadou Abou, as co-Chair of the Joint Steering Committee, and the rest of the Committee members.

We look forward to being closely involved in the projectization phase and to our continued partnership.

Yours sincerely,



Oscar Fernandez Taranco  
Assistant Secretary-General  
Peacebuilding Support Office

## Annex 1: Niger Priority Plan Approval Recommendations from PBSO

The UN Country Team and the partners should consider the following PBSO funding decision recommendations when implementing the Priority Plan:

- The projectization process should be inclusive and involve a broad range of stakeholders and potential implementing partners, including consultations with the Government, civil society, development partners and intended community level beneficiaries.
- The projectization process should start by reviewing the proposed results, beneficiaries and geographic zones with a view to finding additional coherence and complementarity, including focusing on a limited number of communes within a more limited number or cluster of regions that pose the highest risk of violence and unrest vis-a-vis the three Priority Plan outcome areas, and which present the best chance of higher-level impact on peacebuilding. This will reduce the risk of dispersion of limited PBF funds. As much as possible, the targeted zones should be concentrated geographically, with all outcomes targeting the same communities.
- Having reviewed the results, beneficiaries and geographic zones as well as the sequencing and prioritization of proposed activities, the Joint Steering Committee will need to approve a new repartition of the Priority Plan budget, reducing \$2 million from the three outcome areas for this initial phase of the Priority Plan.
- Supporting and involving the youth should be the common thread of all the outcomes and clearer linkages and synergies between the three results (and also within the second result) should be made at the outset.
- The projectization process should include additional analysis of how best to involve and address the needs of women through each of the outcome areas, and this should be better reflected in the Priority Plan indicators, which need to be sex-disaggregated and include a more specific focus on gender. Our office and UN Women will be pleased to provide more details and support.
- The support to dialogue platforms under Result 2.2 should ideally not be focused on elections only but address the key issues of all the Priority Plan outcomes and should, for example, include employers' and employees' representatives as well as the extractive companies and other relevant private sector representatives as much as possible in the context of Niger.
- The labour-intensive component of the Priority Plan (result 1.1) should be carefully designed and targeted, starting with a market study, and focusing

on providing the youth with training and skills which will allow them to be gainfully employed beyond the duration of the project and which will also help decrease the food insecurity of the communities. Lessons from the previous PBF project in Tahoua and the findings from the independent evaluation should be integrated in the development of this component. You could also draw on the experiences and expertise of ILO.

- The environmental effects of labour-intensive projects and of natural resource management in the Sahel should be considered in the projectization phase. In this regard, you could draw on the expertise of UNEP, which should be added as a relevant non-resident UN agency.
- The implementation of the Priority Plan should be accompanied by careful independent and community-level monitoring, which should inform the strategic oversight by the Joint Steering Committee. Our office will provide support in designing a tailored monitoring mechanism.