

Monographic Study on
**DEMOGRAPHY,
PEACE, AND SECURITY
IN THE SAHEL:**

CASE OF NIGER



DRAFT VERSION OF 27 JULY 2020



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Demography, Peace and Security in the Sahel
UNFPA, West and Central Africa Regional Office

Immeuble Wolle Ndiaye, Almadies

BP: 21090 Dakar-Ponty SENEGAL

Fax : +221 33 820 17 31

Website: <http://wcaro.unfpa.org>

Email : wcaro.office@unfpa.org

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACAPS	Assessment Capacities Project
ACLED	Armed conflict location and event data
AQMI	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
CSFRS	Higher Council for Strategic Training and Research
DHSN	Niger Demographic and Health Survey
FAN	Niger Armed Forces
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSIM	Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INS	National Institute of Statistics
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISGS	Islamic State in the Great Sahara
ISSP	Higher Institute of Population Sciences
MOJWA	Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSAG	Non-State Armed Group
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PDES	Economic and Social Development Plan
PNE	National employment policy
PNJ	National youth policy
PSEF	Education and Training Sector Programme
RGPH	General Population and Housing Census
TFR	Total fertility rate
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	WCARO: United Nations Population Fund West and Central Africa Regional Office
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WHO	World Health Organization

INTRODUCTION

Administratively, Niger is subdivided into 8 regions, 63 departments and 266 communes and covers an area of 1,267,000 km² with four ecological zones from south to north: the Sudanian tree-covered savannah zone, the Sahelian zone, the Sahelo-Saharan zone and the desert zone (two thirds of the country). It is bordered to the north by Algeria and Libya, to the east by Chad, to the south by Nigeria and Benin, to the west by Burkina Faso and to the north-west by Mali. Niger is thus landlocked and has no outlet to the sea. The closest port to its capital city is almost 1,000 km away.

With regard to its environment, Niger has a tropical Sudanese-type climate and has a very long dry season that generally lasts eight (8) months, from October to May, and a short rainy season that lasts four (4) to five (5) months, from May (or June) to September. The country therefore depends heavily on agriculture, as well as on livestock, fishing, and crafts. Rainfall has been declining over the last 30 years, which has worsened the increasing desertification of the country. Due to problems of desertification and very erratic rainfall, the country is not immune to food security issues.

With regard to the contribution of the agricultural sector to GDP, the Nigerien economy is sensitive to climatic variations. Irregular rainfall with long periods of drought have upset the balance between the country's population and its food needs. For example, 80% of Niger's poor live in rural areas. In these areas, the cultivable area per active person, pastureland, as well as water resources mobilised and the fallowing period per household have decreased (RN, 2017).

In terms of population, enormous demographic, security, and development challenges are common to the Sahel countries. In Niger, the Government is currently making major efforts, which are being absorbed by rapid population growth. The average population growth rate is 3.8% per year, which leads

to a doubling every 18 years. The consequences of such a situation are multifaceted.

In social matters, Niger has made significant progress in recent years, particularly in education and poverty reduction, the incidence of which has decreased from 48.2% in 2011 to 45.4% in 2014. The phenomenon of food insecurity affects more than one million people every year. According to the results of the 2016 survey on vulnerability to food insecurity, two (2) million people, or nearly 12% of the population are affected by food and nutrition crises.

The Human Development Index (HDI) is still relatively low; it was 0.354 in 2017. It reflects the exceptional growth in enrolments for primary, secondary, and higher education and the difficulties that public authorities face in meeting social demand for education.

Economically, it has to be recognised that economic growth has resumed in Niger since 2010 and even resulted in an average increase in GDP of 6.2% per year between 2010 and 2017 (6.8% in 2018); indeed, GDP increased remarkably by 50% during this period. However, with population growth of 3.8% per year, the country's GDP per capita has risen by an average of only 2.2% per year since 2010. Population growth has thus absorbed two-thirds of the wealth created by the country's renewed economic growth.

With respect to security, the issue of terrorism is rampant, and includes actions by non-State armed groups and terrorists, and in particular the operations of groups such as Boko Haram in the south-east in the border areas with Nigeria and Chad; and also and especially in the west and north-west, where jihadist groups operate in the border areas with Mali and Burkina Faso. These destabilising incursions tarnish the country's international image and repeated abuses by terrorist groups aggravate the security situation

in the country, resulting in the displacement of several thousand people (particularly women and children).

The increasing influx of refugees and population displacements disrupt cross-border trade, and this is having an incredibly negative impact on the population's living conditions and State financial resources. The security situation also puts significant pressure on the country's budget, as the State has to cover increasing security and humanitarian costs. This led to the creation, in August 2011, of the High Authority for Peacebuilding (HACP). With the support of development partners, the State has set up several projects and programmes to take care of victims and consolidate peace by strengthening conflict prevention and management.

To provide more solutions to this unfavourable context, the Nigerien Government is making the capture of the demographic dividend a means of resilience. This objective is now at the heart of its development framework document, the Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth Strategy (SDDCI-Niger 2035).

The Economic and Social Development Plan (PDES) 2017-2021 is the first five-year plan to implement the SDDCI Niger 2035, which the Government adopted on 9 May 2017. The implementation of the PDES has been supported by the SWEDD project and the adoption of a new National Population Policy (NPP) in August 2019. Capturing the demographic dividend is at the centre of this strategy with a view to helping young people to become real development actors.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The issue of peace and security in sub-Saharan Africa is increasingly being discussed due to the rise in conflicts of all kinds in urban and rural areas, and above all in cross-border areas.

This peace, which is so important for development, is threatened by a multitude of increasingly complex factors. Banditry and juvenile delinquency in working-class urban areas, rising tensions over land control in rural areas, armed conflicts between civilian insurgents and governments, the struggle for the control of resources, and international terrorism are all factors that influence insecurity on the continent.

It is important to note that while the direct causes of the majority of these crises should be explored in unemployment and poverty, the scarcity of resources, the scale of social inequalities and poor governance, demographic factors must be considered urgently. Indeed, such factors are being increasingly referred

to in the literature, which has extensively established that there is an (as yet unquantified) interrelationship between demographic, peace, and security trends.

It is within this framework that UNFPA WCARO intends to organise a parallel session on the sidelines of the 20th Bamako Forum, due to be held from 20-22 February 2020, on the relationship between demography, peace, and national security.

The main purpose of this study is to present a succinct analysis of the interrelationships between demography, peace, and security in Niger. More specifically, it will:

- describe the security context in Niger over the last 5 years;
- review the demographic trends and projections from 1960 to 2040 (population size and structure using national data,

changes in the school population aged 5-20, in the young working population aged 15-34, etc.).

- describe changes in the share of the national budget allocated to health (1960-2019);
- describe changes in the share of the national budget allocated to education (1960-2019);
- describe changes in the share of the national

budget allocated to the Ministry responsible for defence and security (1960-2019);

- provide a cross-analysis of the changing population structure, social demand (for education and health) and security problems;
- discuss the population projections for 2040 and link them to social demand and peace and security issues.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

The methodological approach is based on a literature review on the interrelationships between demographic variables, on the one hand, and peace and security on the other. The implications of these interrelationships for future population trends and social and security challenges are also explored. The population trends and prospects have been established based on data from the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) and the United Nations. The financial data are drawn from finance laws and regulations, as well as from International Monetary Fund (IMF) reports. These statistics have been cross-checked against

macroeconomic data and data from various bodies interested in the subject, as well as against studies and research.

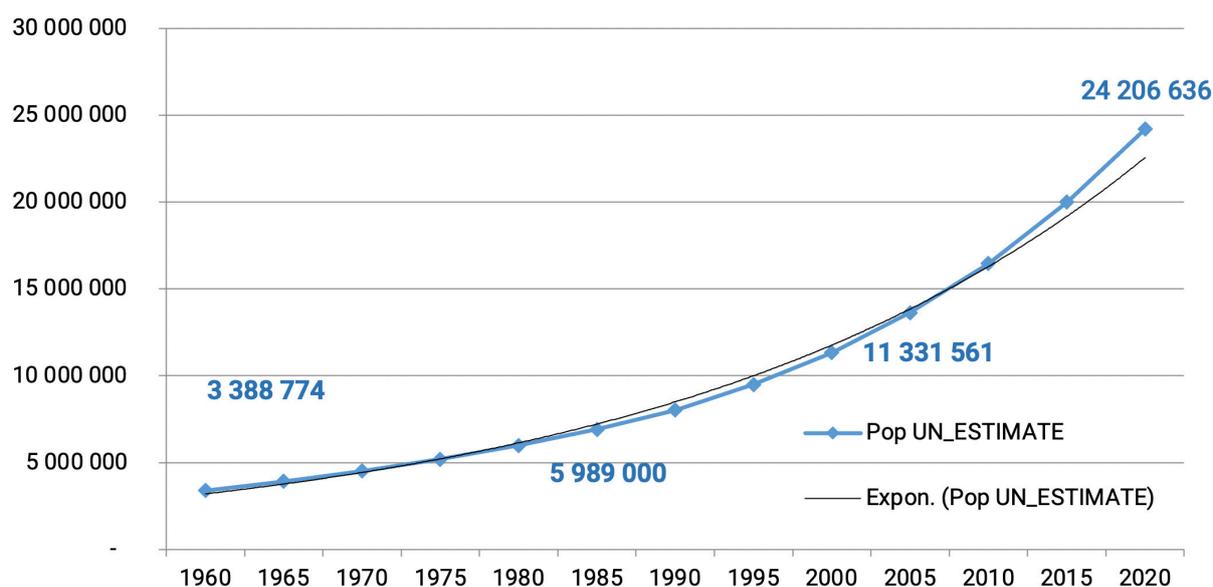
The analytical approach is divided into three parts. The first part focuses on the country's overall context, the second on recent demographic trends and the difficulties of financing dependency due to high population growth. The last section looks at demographic projections and their future consequences (social costs) and explores areas for discussion with a view to addressing them and the challenges that must be overcome to guarantee security and peace in the country.

1. CHANGES IN THE SECURITY CONTEXT, DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES, AND FUNDING OF SOCIAL SECTORS

1.1. Demographic trends over the last 60 years

Like most of its peers in West Africa, Niger gained independence in 1960. At that time, its population was estimated at about 3 million, rising to about 24 million according to estimates by the United Nations Population Division.

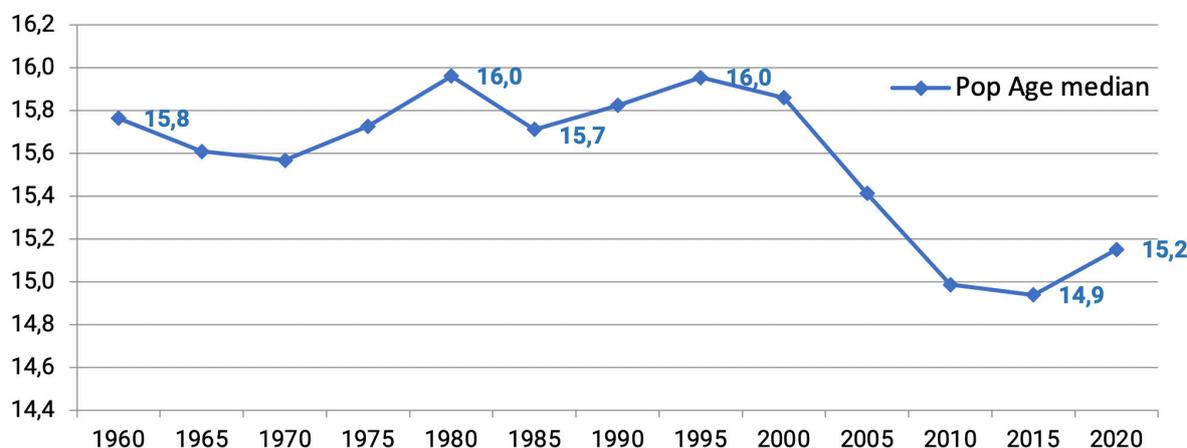
FIGURE 1: Change in Niger's population between 1960 and 2020



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019

According to national data, at the 1988 General Population and Housing Census (RGPH 1988), Niger had 7.3 million inhabitants. In 2020, this population is estimated at 23.2 million people. In 32 years (1988 - 2020), the population of Niger has more than tripled (see Figure 1), with a median population age estimated at 15.2 years in 2020 (United Nations Division, 2019).

FIGURE 2: Changes in the median age of the population in selected regions and countries between 1960 and 2026

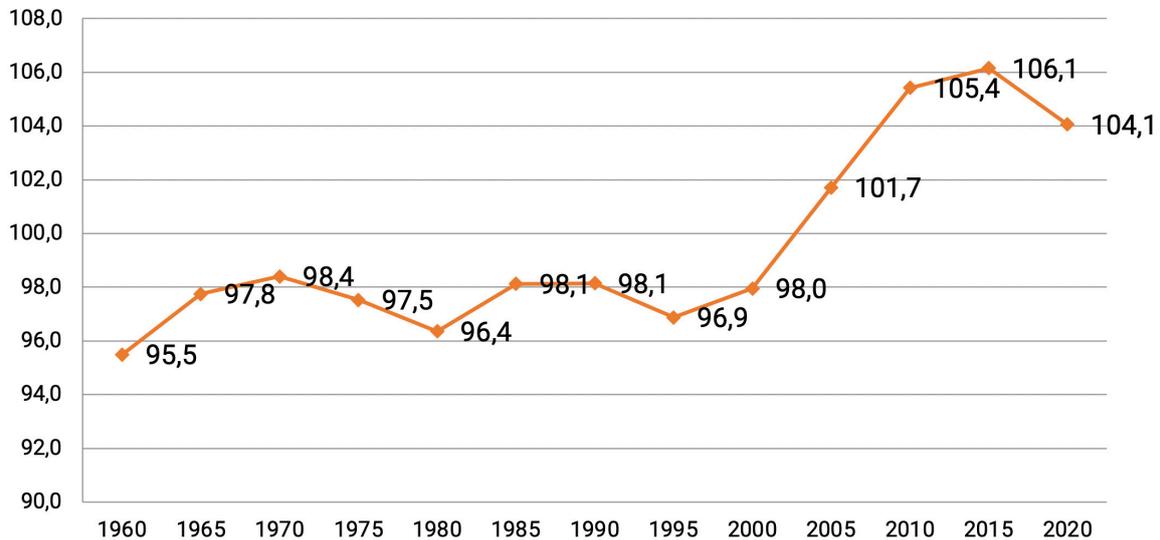


Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019

Contrary to what is generally observed in countries according to demographic transition theories, the dependency of 0-15-year olds has never decreased

since Niger's independence. In fact, it has increased substantially from 95.5% in 1960 to 104.1% in 2020.

FIGURE 3: Change in the ratio of children aged 0-15 years in the population from 1960 to 2020



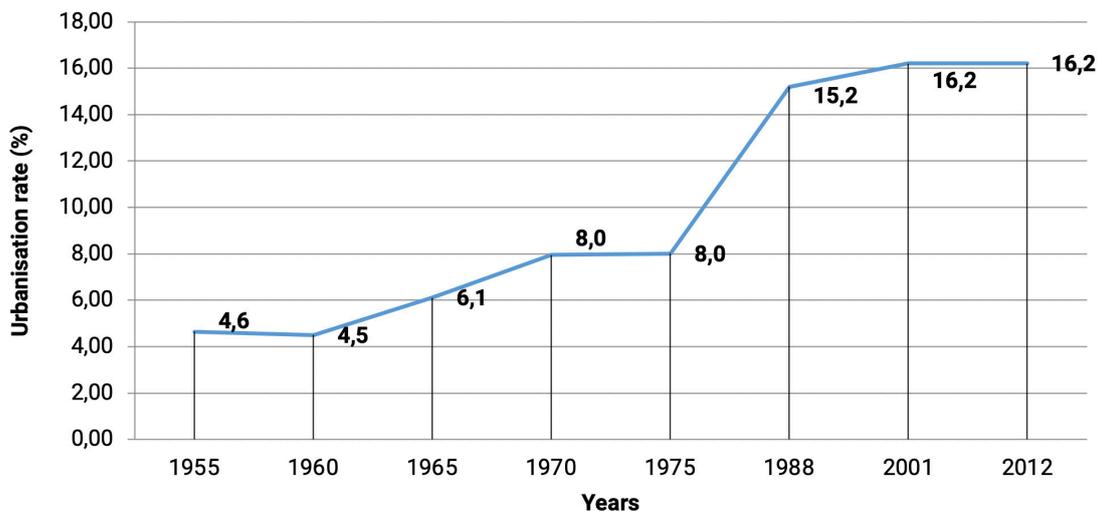
Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019

At the last General Population and Housing Census (RGP/H, 2012), Niger had 17.1 million inhabitants. Women (8.6 million) outnumber men (8.5 million), and more than eight out of ten Nigeriens (83.8%) live in rural areas.

development is creating a high concentration of the urban population, which is growing relatively fast. This dynamic leads to a need for housing and basic social services in the country's major urban areas. In addition to this, there is a need for employment generated by the rural exodus. Lack of employment is a breeding ground for delinquency and creates vulnerability to crime.

Niger's urbanisation rate, for its part, has not changed much since independence. It increased from 5% to 16% between 1960 and 2012. Although weak, this

FIGURE 4: Change in Niger's urbanisation rate between 1955 and 2012

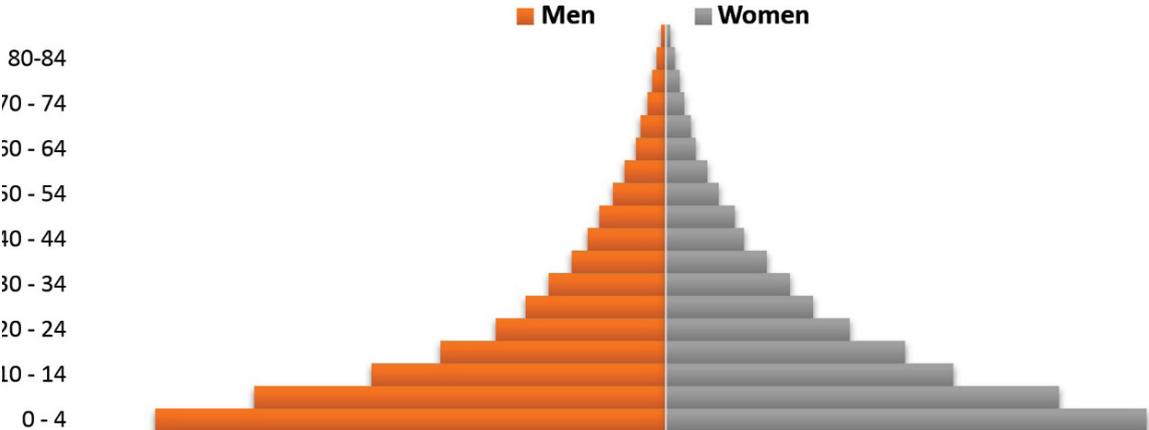


Source: UN Project (1955 to 1975) and NSI (1988 to 2012)

Niger is characterised by an incredibly young population due to a growth rate of 3.9% (RGPH 20001/2012). This trend is doubling the population of Niger every 19 years. More than half of the population (51.2%) is under the age of 15, and nearly seven out of ten Nigeriens (69.5%) are under the age

of 25 (see Graph 1). The first sources of complete population data date back to the 1977 Census. Since then, because of high fertility, the median age of the Nigerien population has been around 14 years. Niamey, which is predominantly urban, is the only region where the median age was 19 in 2012.

FIGURE 5: Age pyramid of the Nigerien population in 2012



Source: RGPH 2012 Niger (INS)

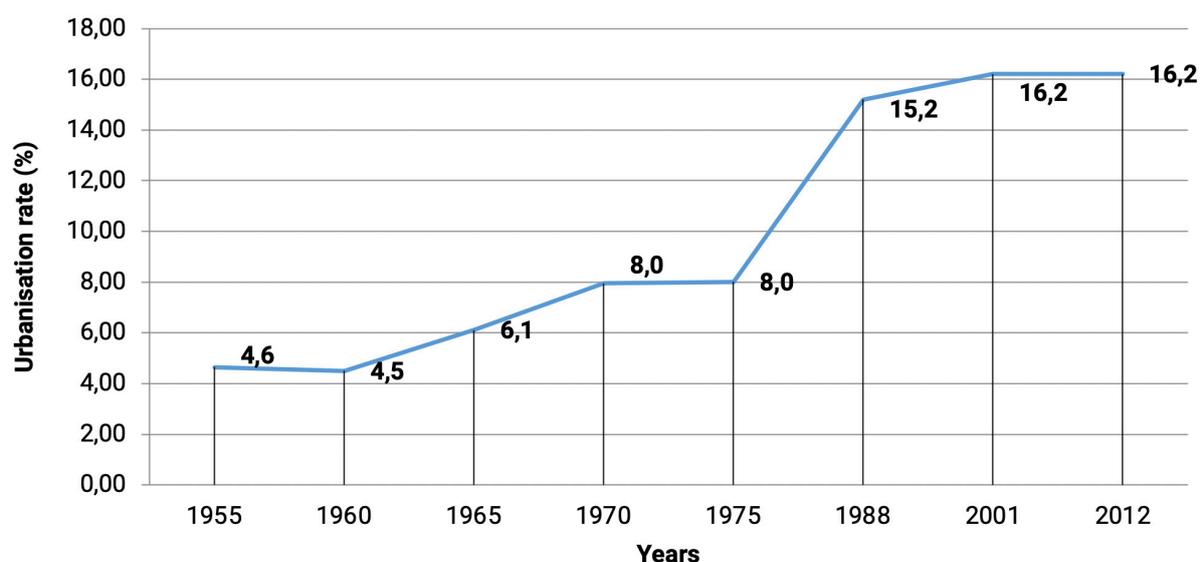
These observations are reflected in the age pyramid, which follows the general pattern of the population structure of developing countries, characterised by a broad base followed by a gradual narrowing over the ages. This structure indicates that the population is young and reflects the scale of the social demand that the working population and public authorities must endeavour to meet, particularly in the areas of food, education, health, and employment. The dependency ratio of young people under 15, which

was 96% in 1960, reached 104% in 2020. This ratio is not expected to reach its 1960 level until 2030.

The country is therefore struggling to put itself on the path towards genuine demographic transition. Although incredibly positive results have been recorded in terms of health mortality (maternal and infant and child mortality¹), the level of fertility remains relatively high. The number of children per woman has remained around 7 since independence.

1 According to the NSI Social Scoreboard, between 2006 and 2015, maternal mortality decreased from 648% to 520% and child mortality from 198% to 126%.

FIGURE 6: Change in Niger's TFR between 1960 and 2020



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019

This almost stationary fertility level is mainly determined by the high prevalence of early marriage (76.3%² of girls aged 20-24 got married before the age of 18 and 28% before the age of 15 in 2012), the low contraceptive prevalence (12.2%) and the

relatively inconclusive efforts to enrol girls in school (in 2016, the gross enrolment rate for girls was 70.2% in primary school, 28.8% in lower secondary school and 5.7% in upper secondary school).

TABLE 1: Changes in the total fertility rate (TFR) in Niger between 1992 and 2012

Region	1992	1998	2006	2012
Niamey	5.9	5.2	5.3	5.3
Agadez	*	*	6.5	5.7
Diffa	*	*	6.7	6.4
Dosso	7.7	7.0	7.5	7.5
Maradi	7.9	8.7	8.0	8.4
Tahoua	7.2	7.0	7.0	7.3
Tillabéry	8.1	7.8	6.8	7.9
Zinder	6.7	7.8	7.4	8.5
Niger	7.4	7.5	7.1	7.6

Source: INS, DHSN 1992, 1998, 2006 and 2012

At this rate, fertility will profoundly change the structure of the Nigerien population, with younger people becoming more and more numerous. At the same time, poverty is rampant in the country and limits the country's ability to foster the development

of its human capital (health and education). Young people are likely to be a source of many dependent³ workers rather than an opportunity to capture the demographic dividend.

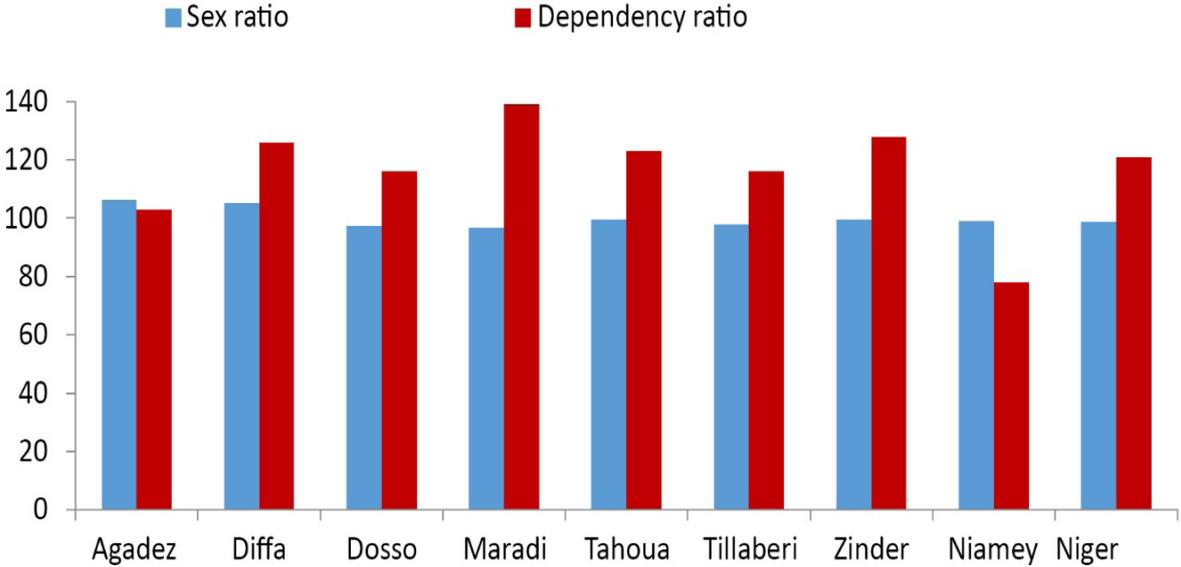
2 The figures in this paragraph come from the Ministry of Planning, PDES 2017-2021

3 The African paradox is that many working people depend on other working people or even on the inactive.

If the population that is not yet active (under 15 years of age) and the population assumed to be no longer active (over 64 years of age) is compared to the potentially active population (15-64 years of age), the dependency ratio is 121.2%. This means

that, on average, each active person cares for more than one inactive person. The working population spends much more of its income on social spending than on capital expenditures.

FIGURE 7: Dependency ratio and sex ratio in 2012



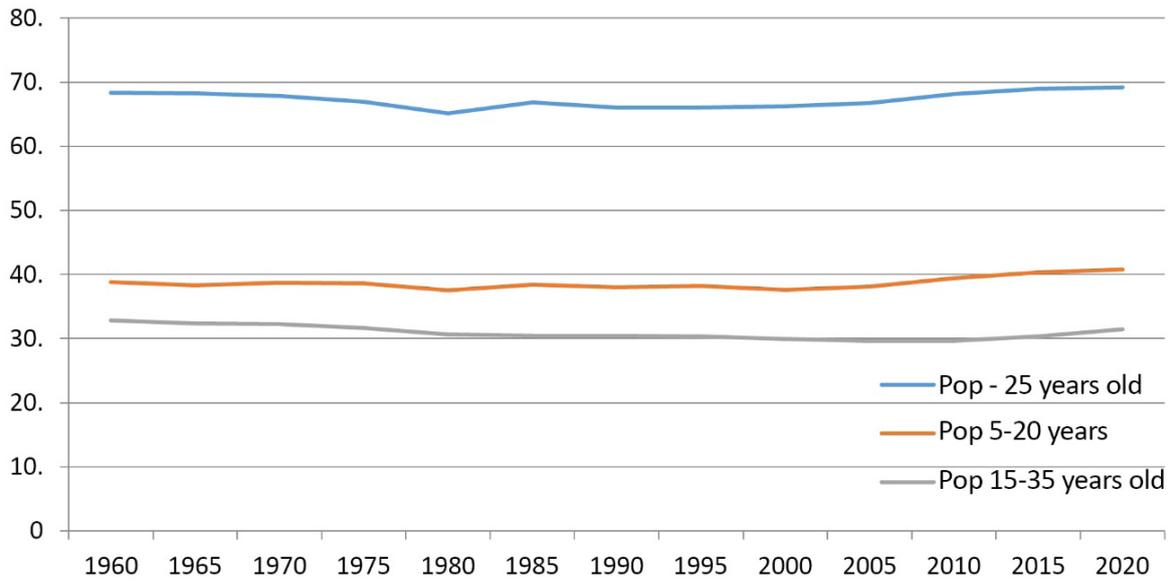
The dependency ratio indicator also shows significant disparities between the country's regions. The most populated regions (Zinder, Maradi and Tahoua) have a dependency ratio that is higher than the national average.

regions are bordering each other and in 2012 there will be a massive influx of returning migrants from Libya due to the prevailing insecurity.

With regard to the sex ratio, only the regions of Agadez and Diffa have more men than women. This situation can be explained by the fact that these two

The evolution of the young age groups in the population, in particular the proportions of under 25, 5-20 and 15-35-year olds, highlights the fact that the population has remained extremely young since independence.

FIGURE 8: Change in the proportions (%) of under 25, 5-20 and 15-35-year olds between 1960 and 2020



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019

This young section of the population is facing a labour market that is not very dynamic in terms of massive, decent, and sustainable job creation. In urban areas, the informal sector acts as a social buffer by draining those rejected by the modern sector. However, it does not offer any guarantees⁴. Informal activities often take the form of disguised unemployment with a plethora of low-skilled or unskilled labour with low pay.

Unemployed, and driven by the necessity to survive, young people are constantly at risk of being recruited into armed gangs (Swisscontact, 2014). When asked whether they were willing to join a terrorist organization, 9.4% of the young people surveyed in the Zinder region answered “yes” and 9% said “perhaps” (IOM, 2017). There is an even greater risk as terrorist groups, smugglers and traffickers can easily move from one country to another (World Bank, 2015). These permeable borders allow them to take advantage of the weak presence of the State (Mohsen, 2019).

Lack of employment opportunities sometimes leads young people to seek livelihoods by any means.

For example, in West African countries where the attractiveness and capacity of the modern sector is threatened by the informal sector, sometimes no legitimate commercial activity generates income as high as organised crime (UNODC, 2013). This income can be used to win over young people. It may also involve various other types of actors including government officials and security officials (World Bank, 2015).

Peace and security strategies must therefore focus on concrete responses to social demand. In particular, they must bring hope to young people in all their diversity. Furthermore, some young people are graduates and unemployed. Others are illiterate or were excluded from the school system early without professional qualifications. More than three-quarters (76.2%) of young people in Niger have at most a primary level of education. Experiencing difficulties in training because access to training entails costs that their families generally cannot bear, these young people often have no other alternative than to engage in precarious activities, migrate or revolt against their difficult living conditions.

⁴ According to the ILO, informality is characterised by the loss of seven essential securities: (i) labour market security, (ii) employment security, (iii) job security, (iv) work security, (v) skills reproduction security, (vi) income security, and (vii) representation security.

According to the results of an IOM survey conducted in 2017 in the Zinder region, 86 per cent of the young people surveyed cited unemployment and social precariousness as the main causes of violent extremism. This scourge is driven by economic difficulties according to 88.1% of the young people questioned in 2016 by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in a survey covering a panel of people from eight Sahelian countries, while only 1.9% of these young Sahelians mentioned religious radicalism.

Crime, political instability, and migration flows are fuelled by the availability of large numbers of young people without prospects (DIAL, 2007⁵). The Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (2019) noted that several thousand Nigeriens have joined Boko Haram, in return for relatively large monthly payments of up to 300,000 CFA francs. Recruitment of individuals to carry out acts of violence and terrorism is facilitated by the existence of family, linguistic and ethnic ties between terrorist groups and local populations (IOM, 2017).

Aware of the scale of the problem, the Nigerien Government adopted a National Employment Policy (PNE) in 2009 and revised its National Youth Policy (PNJ) in 2011. Furthermore, the Economic and Social Development Plan (PDES) 2017-2021 includes programmes to improve the situation of young people, including:

- the programme to promote the economic integration of young people, which focuses on (i) improving the quality of training for young people with more practical content that is better suited to the needs of local labour markets; (ii) making the various existing integration schemes more efficient and adopting incentives to encourage young people's access to the world of work and youth entrepreneurship;

- the programme for youth participation in development, which is based on the involvement of young people in sustainable development;
- the youth sector management programme, the aim of which is to improve the management of the youth sector and to define its funding mechanisms.

The Government of Niger therefore intends to overcome several challenges to meet an increasingly pressing social demand.

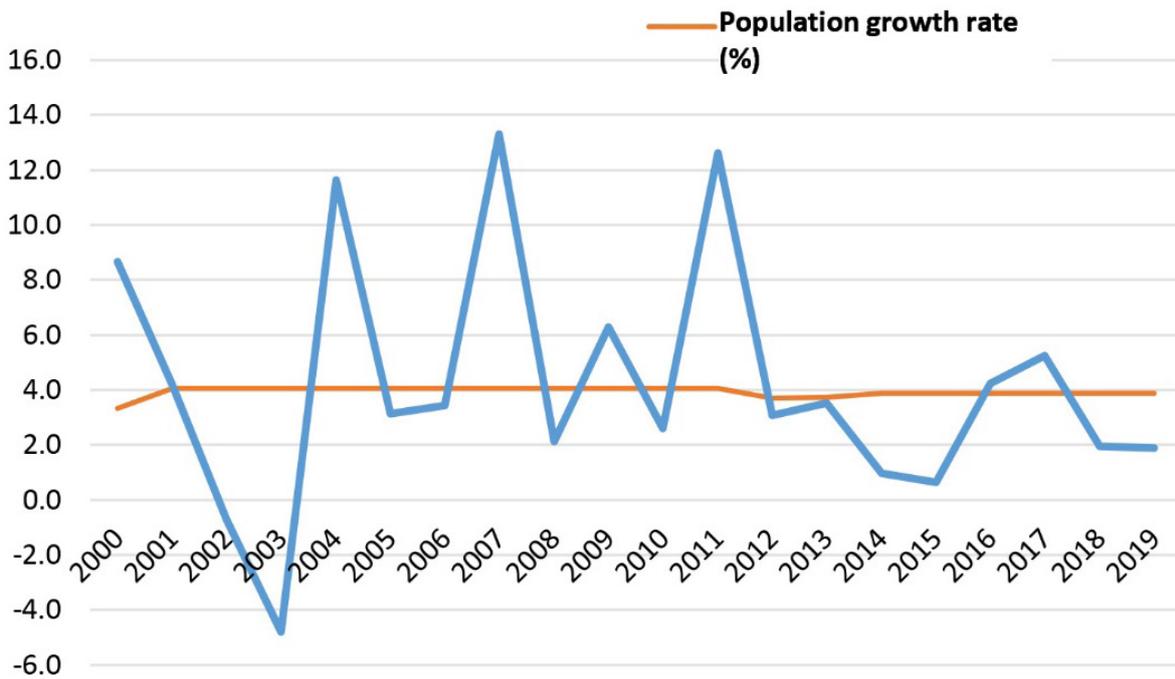
1.2.Challenges associated with high population growth and population structure

1.2.1.Changes in the socio-economic context over the last twenty years

Multiple efforts to control demographic variables in Niger have not been able to slow down the rate of population growth. Over the past two decades, the natural population growth rate has remained virtually unchanged. In addition to this strong demographic growth, the GDP per capita is fluctuating sharply.

5 Cited by L. ANNE (2010).

FIGURE 9: Comparative changes in population growth rate and GDP per capita growth rate



The socio-economic costs associated with such an imbalance are enormous. Lower mortality increases life expectancy⁶ and high fertility makes the population younger. The number of people in a situation of dependency is growing and the scope of public expenditure devoted to financing this dependency is widening.

Through the National Transfer Accounts (NTA), it is now possible to produce an individual and aggregate measurement of the acquisition and distribution of economic resources at different ages. These accounts are intended to understand how economic flows move between different age groups in a population in a particular country and year (CREFAT, 2015). The resulting generational economy is therefore the process by which social institutions and economic mechanisms are used by each generation or age group to

produce, consume, share and save resources: Four economic activities lie at the heart of the generational economy: working, consuming, sharing and saving. Through the latter two, (working) adults bridge the gaps between the production and consumption of the young and the elderly. Thus, depending on its size, the dependent section of the population has an effect on the working people’s ability to save and invest, and therefore on the country’s development potential.

For example, the 2015 national accounts aggregates were used for the 2019 profile. In terms of health, the 0-14 age group (children) consumed 23.2 billion CFA francs, i.e. 50% of total public health consumption, compared with 32.8% for the 15-34 age group and 18% for the over-34 age group. It emerges that aggregate public health consumption declines with age (Figure 10).

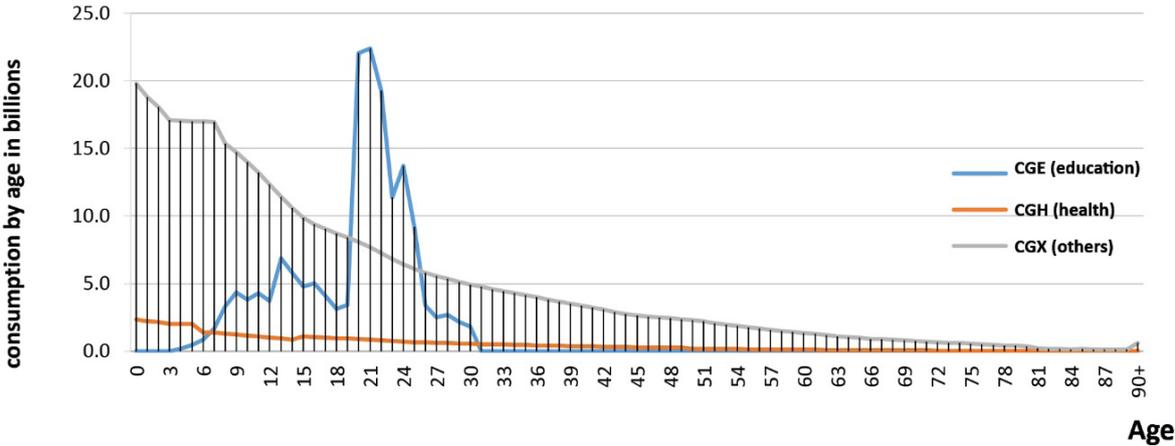
6 Old age comes with fragile health situations and is a major source of increased health care spending.

In 2015, out of a total cost of 71.2 billion CFA francs in public education expenditure, children aged 3 to 14 account for 60 billion CFA francs alone, which is 84.2% of the total. Older individuals aged 15 to 34 used 11.2 billion CFA francs, which is 15.8% of the total.

Aggregate public consumption, excluding education and health, was 464.4 billion in 2015,

51.7% of which was allocated to children aged 0 to 14, which amounts to 240.3 billion CFA francs (children). Young people between 15 and 34 years of age received 136,3 billion CFA Francs, which is 29.4% of the total. Those aged 34 and over account for 87.8 billion CFA francs, representing 18.9% of the total amount.

FIGURE 10: Aggregate public consumption profile by age



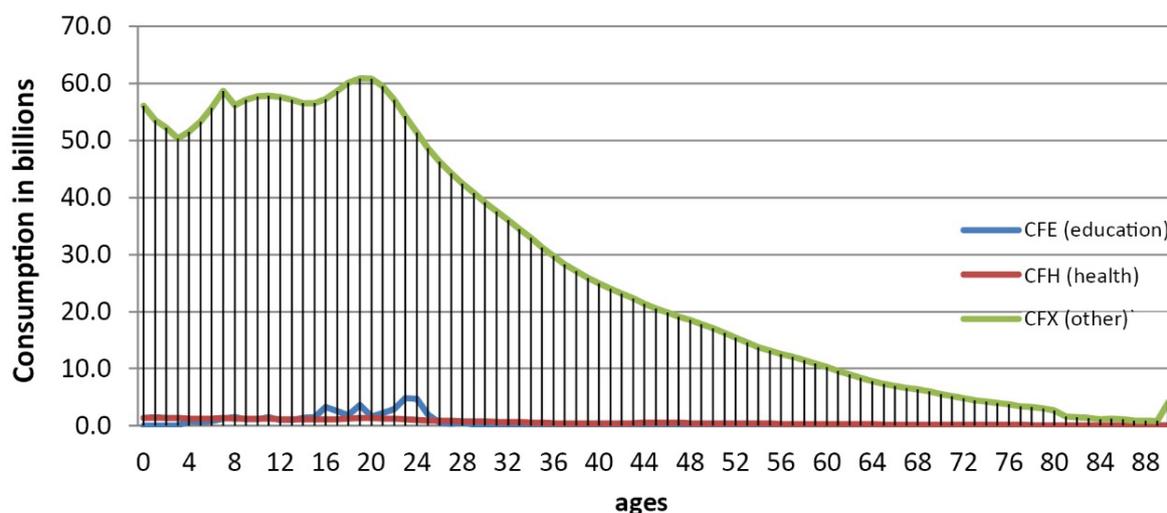
Source: Report of the National Demographic Dividend Observatory (NDDO), based on data from the 2014 National Survey on Household Living Conditions and Agriculture (ECVMA) and 2015 National Accounts.

Private spending on education amounted to 51.1 billion in 2015. 25.8% was allocated to 3 to 14-year olds, i.e. 13.2 billion CFA francs, and 37.8 billion CFA francs to 15 to 34-year olds, that is 74.2%.

Household expenditure on health totalled 59.4 billion CFA francs in 2015. The age groups 0 to 14 (children), 15 to 34 and over 34 received, respectively, 21.1 billion CFA francs (35.5%), 21.7 billion CFA francs (36.5%) and 16.6 billion CFA francs (27.9%) of the total aggregate private expenditure on health.

Aggregate private consumption excluding education and health was 2,761.7 billion CFA francs in 2015. Children aged 0-14 years accounted for 929.8 billion CFA francs, or 33.7%. Young people aged 15 to 34 used 1109.4 billion CFA francs, or 40.1%, compared to 722.6 billion CFA francs for adults over 35, or 26.2% (Figure 10).

FIGURE 11: Aggregate private consumption profile by age in Niger in 2015



Source: NDDO report, based on data from the 2014 ECVMA and 2015 National Accounts.

Overall, due to the large number of young people in the population, a deficit of 1880 billion CFA Francs is recorded in Niger as the aggregate gap between consumption and income among those aged 0-27 and 64 years and over. It represented 43.8% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2015. This deficit was well in excess of the surplus generated by

effective workers, which amounted to 27.6% of GDP.

Surpluses generated by the effective workers are transferred to children and the elderly. However, these surpluses remain insufficient to cover all consumption needs.

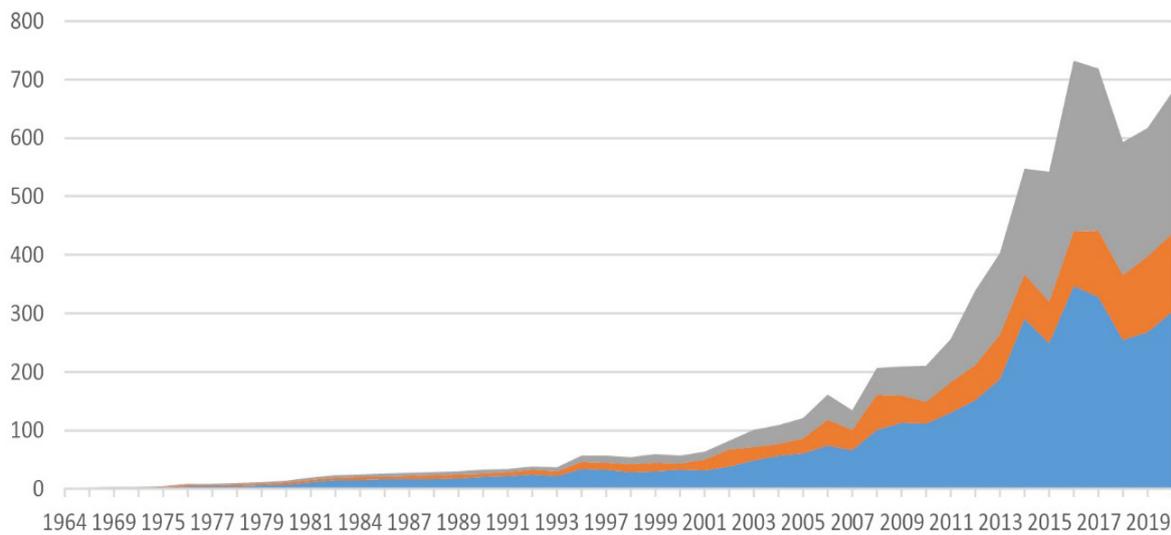
TABLE 2: Breakdown (in billions) of LCD deficits/surpluses by sex in Niger in 2015

Age group with a deficit	Men (age 0-27 and 64 and over)	Women (age 0-28 and 61 and over)	Total (age 0-27 and 64 and over)
Total deficit (billion CFAF)	1,006.5	876	1,880
Share of GDP 2015 (%)	23.5	20.4	43.8
Age group with a surplus	age 28-63	age 29-60	age 28-63
Total surplus (billion FCFA)	734.5	451.8	1,183.8
Share of GDP 2015 (%)	17.1	10.5	27.6

Figure 12 shows the trend, from 1964 to 2020, in budget expenditure allocated to the social sectors (education, health and social action) and to meeting

security needs. All these expenditure categories show an exponentially increasing trend.

FIGURE 12: Changes in social and security expenditure from 1964 to 2020 in Niger

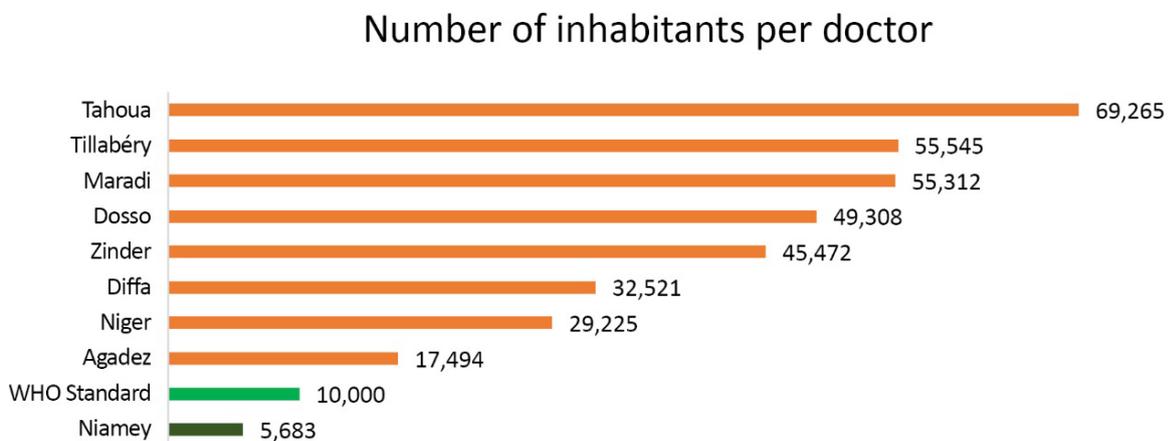


Source: Drawn from various finance laws from 1964 to 2020.

In economic and social terms, even if rural employment is almost universal, unemployment affected 13% of the active population in 2011 and 17% in 2014. According to ILO standards, the number of new job seekers increases significantly. Their numbers increased from 66 thousand in 1977, 94 thousand in 1988, 221 thousand in 2001, 520 thousand in 2012 and more than a million in 2020. At the same time, the poverty rate decreased from 48.2% in 2011 to 45.4% in 2014, while the number of poor people increased by about half a million over the same period. In education, the enrolment rate is close to 80% in primary school compared to 30% in secondary school.

A lot of progress has been made on the health front. The under-five mortality rate fell from 318 per thousand in 1992 to 126 per thousand in 2015. This trend highlights an impressive performance; nevertheless, further improvements could be achieved if the country improves the provision of health care. While, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) standard, there should be 10,000 inhabitants per doctor, this ratio was 29,225 inhabitants per doctor in 2015, with wide variations depending on the region of residence. Only the region of Niamey meets the WHO standard.

FIGURE 13: Distribution of the number of inhabitants per doctor by region in 2015



Source: INS, Social Scorecard, 2018 edition.

Moreover, the population size also affects the ability of the Nigerien authorities to meet educational needs. However, education is expected to play a major role in the process of controlling demographic variables, particularly fertility.

By implementing the Education and Training Sector Programme (PSEF) 2014-2024 and previous education policies, Niger has been able to record some incredibly positive results. Between 2015 and 2017, the number of children enrolled in primary school grew at an average annual rate of 6.4%. This growth is 15.4% in lower secondary education and 17.6% in upper secondary education. The number of young people enrolled in universities or higher education institutions increased by 21.3% between 2016 and 2017.

Despite this progress, many Nigerien children are deprived of their right to education. They live in public spaces permanently or some of the time. Left to their own devices without family or special protection, they are vulnerable to physical and psychological violence, abuse, disease, drug addiction, etc. Over time, they become initiated and accustomed to acts of violence. In the medium term, they pose a considerable threat to peace and social tranquility.

It should also be noted that the quality of teaching is questionable. Therefore, for many young people, education no longer plays its traditional role as a path to social advancement (May and Guengant, 2014). As a result of limited public resources, public authorities are opting to address immediate challenges rather than adopting a medium to long-term vision.

In addition, demographic growth, rural exodus, and the weak economic environment have made youth employment a major issue (Anne et al. 2011). In 2005, a study carried out by the NSI already stressed that unemployment was much more prevalent

among young people (15.9% for the entire working population and 23.7% for young people aged 15-29). The results of the 2012 RGPH indicate that, in urban areas, more than three out of five young people aged 15-24 (62.7%) are not in the labour force. This proportion is equally as high in rural areas (41.6%).

1.2.2. Trends in the security situation over the last 20 years

Threats to stability and peace are sources of various types of human rights violations. Both upstream and downstream, young people are much more affected. In this context, in 2015, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2250 to balance peace and security issues with human development variables. The Resolution stresses the need to improve the economic and social well-being of young people in order to prevent conditions leading to radicalization and violent extremism. The aim is thus to place human security at the heart of the struggle for peace and stability.

In Niger, the recent terrorist attacks, in which many civilian and military casualties have been reported, are evidence of the seriousness of the security situation. On 10 December 2019, a terrorist group attacked the military camp of the Nigerien Armed Forces (FAN) in Inates⁷, killing 71 soldiers, wounding 12 and leaving some 30 missing. One month later (January 11, 2020), the Chinagodar⁸ military camp was the target of an even more deadly attack: 89 military soldiers and 63 terrorists killed. These two attacks illustrate the magnitude of the security challenges facing the Government of Niger.

7 Inates is located in the region of Tillabéry, 5 km from the border with Mali.

8 Chinagodar is also located in the region of Tillabéry, 10 km from the border with Mali.

As a reminder, some twenty years ago, a sect called Jama'atou ahloussounna lidda'awati wal jihad (People Committed to the Prophet's Teachings for Propagation and Jihad) emerged in Nigeria. It regards Western-style education as a sin (Boko Haram, in the Hausa language). Since 2009, following the summary execution of its leader by the Nigerian police, Boko Haram multiplied attacks, but until 2014 they were limited to Nigerian territory. According to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), in the first half of 2014, this sect carried out 95 attacks, including the abduction of 200 schoolgirls from Chibok.

In February 2015, the countries of the Lake Chad Basin (Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria) formed a mixed multinational force of 8,000 troops with the aim of effectively containing the onslaught of this terrorist movement in a coordinated manner. The conflicts subsequently spread to all four countries. Later, Boko Haram proclaimed itself the "West African Province of the Islamic State". Refusal to collaborate is a reason for violence against local populations, who are referred to as the ungodly. As a result, many civilians have been killed or abducted during attacks by Boko Haram. In 2019, in the Diffa region, 88 civilians were killed, and 12 others were abducted in April and March respectively (OCHA⁹, 2019), and there has been large-scale displacement of people fleeing hostilities. In 2019, there were an estimated 350,000 refugees and internally displaced persons in Niger (IMF, 2019).

Niger, which, despite episodes of rebellion (notably the repeated Tuareg insurgencies), used to be a haven of peace, is therefore experiencing a fragile security situation. The region of Diffa in the far east and the border areas with Libya, Algeria and Mali are particularly exposed to terrorist attacks by various armed groups, including Malian insurgents¹⁰ who have taken refuge in Niger, former combatants from Niger, Chad, and Sudan who were mercenaries in the war in Libya¹¹; Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Islamic State in the Great Sahara (ISGS¹²), and Boko Haram.

Security risks are exacerbated by intra-community rivalries, which are generally related to land control or the sharing of other types of resources (see Box 1). The reason why many Nigerien Fulani join the ISGS is essentially to defend themselves against the Malian Tuaregs, with whom they have been in conflict for a long time (Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons, 2019).

9 Cited by the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (2019).

10 In 2012, the north of Mali fell into the hands of Islamist militias, who took advantage of the rapprochement between the Tuareg Islamist movement Ansar Dine and AQIM.

11 Since March 2011, Libya has been embroiled in a war that led to the fall of Gaddafi's regime. That war and the instability and proliferation of weapons that followed have considerably darkened the prospects for security and peace in the Sahel.

12 The ISGS was founded in 2015 by the spokesperson of the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO). The ISGS has been officially affiliated to the Islamic State since 2016 (Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons, 2019).

Box 1: Niger's security situation, a heavy toll

In 2018, 107 people were killed, 97 injured and 131 abducted in 206 security incidents. These were mainly attacks by non-State armed groups (NSAGs) (184 incidents) and inter-communal conflicts (22 incidents). The most affected regions were Diffa (on the border with Nigeria), which was targeted by 156 incidents including 137 NSAG attacks and 19 community incidents; Tillabéry (on the border with Mali and Burkina Faso), affected by 46 incidents including 44 NSAG attacks and two community incidents; and Tahoua (on the border with Mali), targeted by four incidents including three NSAG attacks and one community incident. In Diffa, attacks by Boko Haram targeted civilians and the defence and security forces. In the border area with Burkina Faso, security incidents consisted mainly of assassinations, kidnappings, threats against certain villages and intercommunal conflicts. The northern zone, which borders Mali, was mainly affected by incursions by armed jihadist groups, kidnappings, and community violence. In the Diffa region (south-east), the number of Boko Haram attacks decreased in 2017 and the first part of 2018, but increased again in late 2018 and early 2019, according to an April 2019 report by ACAPS, a Norwegian NGO specialising in humanitarian needs assessment and analysis. According to United Nations information reported by ACAPS, at least 52 violent incidents attributed to Boko Haram took place in the Diffa region between November 2018 and January 2019 (15 in November 2018, 17 in December 2018 and 20 in January 2019). In March 2019, 21 attacks were recorded, killing at least 88 civilians. By way of comparison, the source indicates that throughout 2018, violence led to the deaths of 107 civilians.

Source: Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (2019).

These organised crime networks pose enormous security challenges to the entire Sahel region. For example, AQIM carries out sporadic actions in Mali, Niger, Mauritania, and Burkina Faso (World Bank, 2015). The security threat is increasingly taking on a regional dimension and has reached a new turning point with the creation of the G5 Sahel (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger). The G5 Sahel is coordinating the response with foreign military forces, in particular the French Operation Barkhane¹³, which has been present in the region since August 2014.

At the same time, terrorist groups (ISGS, Ansar Dine, Al Mourabitoune, AQIM and the Macina Liberation Front) have decided to coordinate their actions by creating what they have called the "Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims" (GSIM), a very active organisation on the border between Niger and Mali since 2017.

According to the IMF (2019), although these terrorist networks are not generally based in Niger, Niger's geographic location may lead to wider security tensions. The number of terrorist incidents in Niger has increased significantly since 2015, and reached an average of two incidents per million inhabitants in 2018 (Tableau 3).

13 In 2019, this operation had 4,500 soldiers (Office of the Commissioner-General for Refugees and Stateless Persons, 2019).

TABLE 3: Number of security incidents per million inhabitants in selected African countries

	Burkina Faso	Cameroon	Chad	Mali	Mauritania	Côte d'Ivoire	Niger	Nigeria	Senegal
2011	0	0	0	0.1	0.3	0.1	0	0.4	0.1
2012	0	0	0	0.6	0	1.2	0	2.6	0.8
2013	0	1.9	0	3.6	0	0	0.3	2	0
2014	0	1.9	0	3.7	0	0	0.3	1.9	0
2015	0.1	1.9	1.6	4.7	0	0.2	1.4	2	0.1
2016	0.5	2.9	0.3	6.2	0	0.1	1.5	1.2	0.1
2017	3.1	4.4	0.3	11.2	0	0	1.1	1.4	0
2018	6.6	11.9	2.1	14.2	0.3	0.1	1.9	1.9	0.3

Source: IMF Report of August 2019 for the 2019 Article IV Consultation, Fourth Review Under the Extended Credit Facility in Niger

As noted by the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (2019), in 2018, the Nigerien authorities participated in campaigns against terrorist groups on the borders with Mali, Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad. They also signed a security cooperation agreement with Libya, Chad and Sudan. Under this agreement, each signatory state authorises the forces of peer countries to enter its territory to hunt down terrorist and criminal groups.

Niger's security situation unexpectedly deteriorated sharply in 2019. Hundreds of civilians and military personnel lost their lives. The hostilities have also led to massive population displacements and the closure of many schools.

According to OCHA (2020), Niger would register 187,000 Internally Displaced Persons and 218,000 Refugees. The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) increased as a result of conflict from 59,000 in 2015, 121,000 in 2016, 129,000 in 2017, 158,000 in 2018, to 187,000 in 2019. This puts additional pressure on resources and host communities in almost every region of the country, leading to further new conflicts.

The improvement of the security situation in Niger raises new issues. It requires a vision that considers several factors, including mass poverty, the weakening of family capacities, the low level of human development, etc. Demographics is a cross-cutting theme in all these issues.

1.3. Impacts of demographic change and insecurity on human capital financing: A national perspective

In recent years there has been a sharp increase in security expenditure (*Table 4*). In 2010, it accounted for 10.3% of the expenditure financed with internal State resources. This share increased to 15.3% in 2017. At the same time, domestic resource mobilization has remained low since 2015. There a wide range of reasons for this moderate performance: security shocks, falling prices of mining and petroleum products, the predominance of low-taxed activities (agricultural and informal), high impact of tax exemptions, especially those relating to imports of military materials and equipment, etc.

TABLE 4: Change in budget allocations (%) to security and social sectors

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Security	10.3	7.1	15.9	13.5	14.3	16	16.1	15.3
Health	6.6	8.4	7.6	7.4	6	5.1	5.2	6.3
Education	19	19.9	18.9	18.2	23	17.9	19.2	18.1
Rural Development	6.3	11.1	10.3	10.1	13.9	4.5	4	10.2
Infrastructure	6.9	4.6	7.7	6.3	5.1	10.3	6.2	10.6
Total social expenditure	38.8	44	44.5	42	48	37.8	34.6	45.2
External debt			565.1	682.6	756.6	1,124.1	1,292.4	

Source: IMF (2019) Report of the 2019 Article IV Consultation, Fourth Review Under the Extended Credit Facility in Niger.

Social benefits have been kept at a fairly high level, at the cost of increasing external debt. However, since 2015 (the year Niger began to suffer Boko Haram atrocities), security-related spending has eclipsed spending in all social sectors except infrastructure spending. It is clear that the security context is prioritised in budget allocations, which reduces financing for other social sectors that are essential to the country's development.

The scale of the socio-economic, political, and environmental challenges varies according to different demographic trajectories (Salissou, 2011; Guengant, 2011 and 2015). According to the theory of social capillarity developed by A. Dumont¹⁴, the prospects of economic and social promotion encourage couples to limit the number of their children that they have, either to facilitate their own promotion by reducing family expenses and constraints, or to concentrate their efforts on a limited number of children. Thus, poor demographic progress (especially in reproductive health) is associated with poorer outcomes in health, education, etc.

In terms of health, human capital theories agree that a country's economic prosperity is highly dependent on the overall health status of its population. Since deteriorating or failing health makes work painful or even impossible, healthy workers are more productive and have fewer absences. Demographic costs expose vulnerable populations to poor socio-health conditions: malnutrition, limited access to health care and safe water, consumption of fraudulent or counterfeit medicines¹⁵, obscene housing conditions, etc. These situations create soaring health care needs.

More than half of the population living in rural areas has no access to drinking water, i.e. more than 9 million Nigeriens. About the same number of Nigeriens live in areas where there are no health facilities within a radius of 5 km².

14 Quoted by H. Leridon (2014).

15 Between December 2011 and June 2012, customs authorities in Benin and Togo seized approximately 130 tons of tramadol overdose (200 mg instead of the authorised 50 mg dose) from India, almost all of which was destined for Niger (UNODC, 2013).

2. POPULATION PROJECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL DEMAND AND NATIONAL STABILITY

The relationships between population and development have long been proven. These include the effects that population size and/or the magnitude of population growth could have on economic and social development. It has often been suggested that war began with the creation of “wealth”, a source of competition between men. The best lands, deposits of rare materials were appropriate issues of conflict. Other factors, such as population growth, the quest for prestige and power, and the need to assert oneself in armed confrontation, supported this theory (Jean Guilaine, 2014)

In 2020, the population of Niger is about 23.2 million inhabitants in an area of 1,267,000 Km², giving a population density of 18.3 inhabitants per Km² compared to only 3 inhabitants per Km² in 1960. On the basis of demographic trends observed in the past and constant very high fertility level, this population will continue to grow to reach 42 million in 2035¹⁶ and according to NSI projections, 49 million and 165 million in 2040 and 2100, respectively, according to the United Nations “LOW¹⁷” scenario; and 51 million and 216 million for the same years for the “HIGH” scenario. These numbers would lead respectively to densities of 33, 38 and 130 inhabitants per km² according to the INS scenario and the UN “MEDIUM” scenario and 170 inhabitants per km² according to the UN “HIGH” scenario.

These figures reflect the considerable pressure that is placed on the environment and resources, which can create or exacerbate tensions and conflicts between individuals and communities with competing interests as regards sharing the same resources.

2.1. Population projections for the period to 2040

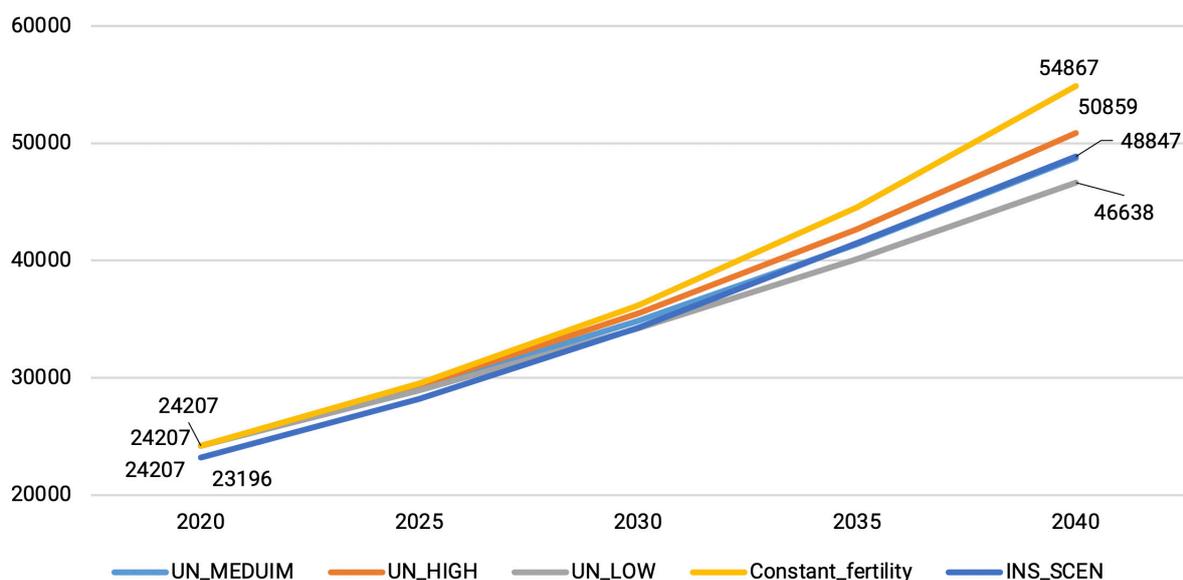
Several national and international institutions produce projections on population issues. This analysis is based on the 2019 projections of the United Nations and the National Institute of Statistics of Niger.

Regardless of the source of the projections or the scenario considered, Niger’s population growth is expected to remain high over the next twenty (20) years: the number of Niger’s inhabitants would be between approximately 47.6 and 54.9 million in 2040.

16 Scenario projections INS 2012-2035

17 <https://population.un.org/wpp/>

FIGURE 14: Changes in Niger's population according to the United Nations and NSI scenarios between 2020 and 2040



In 2100, the population will reach between 123.7 to 695.0 million according to the same United Nations scenarios and 351.5 million in the INS scenario. This strong population growth is highlighted by growth rates that remain above 3% in all scenarios and according to all institutions (Table 5).

The main socio-economic and political challenges

associated with the different demographic trajectories are: capacities to meet the population's basic health and education needs; the potential of the farming system to ensure food and nutritional security; the capacity of the authorities to develop and implement effective policies to make significant progress towards sustainable development.

TABLE 5: Changes in the population growth rate between 2020 and 2100

Scenario assumption	2020-2025	2025-2030	2030-2035	2035-2040	2095-2100
Intermediate	3.7	3.6	3.4	3.3	1.1
High	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.5	1.6
Low	3.6	3.4	3.2	3.0	0.6
Constant fertility	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.2
INS	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.6	

The population is growing rapidly under the combined effect of declining mortality (infant and maternal) and continued high fertility (the classic baby boom phase described in demographic transition theories).

Until 2040, fertility levels of 6 to 7 children are expected. Fertility levels are not expected to drop until 2100, by around 2 children per woman. This trend entails social costs in terms of education, health, and development infrastructure needs.

TABLE 6: Changes in life expectancy at birth between 2020 and 2040 and in 2100.

Intermediate	United Nations Scenario			INS Scenario		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
2020-2025	63.62	62.41	64.89	65.18	64.54	65.82
2025-2030	65.26	63.94	66.61	65.88	65.24	66.52
2030-2035	66.67	65.25	68.12	66.6	65.94	67.26
2035-2040	67.88	66.34	69.43	67.08	66.42	67.75
2040-2045	68.91	67.28	70.55	67.57	66.9	68.24
2045-2050	69.83	68.09	71.59	68.05	67.38	68.73
2050-2055	70.61	68.79	72.48	68.53	67.86	69.21
2055-2060	71.32	69.42	73.29	69.02	68.33	69.7
2060-2065	71.98	69.99	74.05	69.5	68.81	70.19
2065-2070	72.59	70.53	74.74	69.99	69.29	70.68
2070-2075	73.18	71.07	75.40	70.47	69.77	71.17
2075-2080	73.77	71.62	76.03	70.95	70.25	71.66
2080-2085	74.36	72.19	76.64	71.44	70.73	72.14
2085-2090	74.94	72.76	77.23	71.92	71.21	72.63
2090-2095	75.52	73.33	77.79	72.4	71.69	73.12
2095-2100	76.10	73.93	78.34	72.89	72.17	73.61

At the same time, lives are getting longer. Life expectancy at birth is expected to be between 62 and 65 years according to the different scenarios between 2020 and 2025, compared to 35 to 40 years in the 1960s. Health and living conditions have therefore improved considerably. It may also be stated that the first phase of the “declining mortality” demographic transition is well advanced, although significant progress remains to be made (Guengant, 2011).

2.2. Demographic scenarios, dependency ratio, social demand, and security

The dependency ratio represents the number of persons under 15 years of age and 65 years of age or older per 100 persons aged 15 to 64 years. The age ranges selected may vary (INED)¹⁸. In addition to the overall ratio, a separate youth dependency ratio and an old-age dependency ratio are also calculated due to the significant difference between the needs of the two categories of dependents.

18 <https://www.ined.fr/fr/lexique/rapport-de-dependance/>

2.2.1. Demographic dependency across scenarios

In all scenarios considered, overall dependency ratios and the dependency ratios of children under 15 years of age change slowly. This overall ratio is expressed as a percentage and compares children under 15 and persons over 65 years of age, on the one hand, to adults (the working population) between 15 and 64 years of age on the other. Dependency ratios will only start to become positive (i.e. allowing for increased savings) after 2030

(Table 7). This overall indicator hides significant disparities between the dependency of children under 15 and the elderly. It should be noted that these ratios are inflated by the high number of children under the age of 15, which is an age group that requires the highest demographic investments. In any case, whatever the scenario, the country will still be affected by the high proportion of (inactive) children under the age of 15; moreover, this would imply that Niger's population, as well as needs, will inevitably double in the next 20 years (in 2040).

TABLE 7 : Economic dependency ratio by scenario and by year between 2020 and 2040.

Scenario assumption	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Total (0-14, 65 and over)					
Intermediate	109.5	105.4	100.4	95.1	89.6
High	109.5	106.9	104.1	101.2	96.2
Low	109.5	103.9	96.8	89.0	82.9
Constant fertility	109.5	108.0	108.2	109.9	110.4
INS	113.8	105.0	103.0	121.1	101.3
Elderly (65 and over)					
Intermediate	5.4	5.3	5.2	5.0	4.8
High	5.4	5.3	5.2	5.0	4.8
Low	5.4	5.3	5.2	5.0	4.9
Constant fertility	5.4	5.3	5.2	5.0	4.8
INS	5.3	4.8	4.7	3.1	4.6
Young people (0-14 years old)					
Intermediate	104.1	100.1	95.2	90.1	84.7
High	104.1	101.6	98.9	96.2	91.4
Low	104.1	98.6	91.6	84.1	78.0
Constant fertility	104.1	102.7	103.0	104.9	105.6
INS	108.5	100.2	98.3	118.1	96.6

The under-15s alone would lead to dependency of more than 100% until 2025 in any scenario and until 2035 for the UN "constant fertility" scenario and the INS scenario. The consequence of this uncontrolled population dynamics is an explosion in social needs, particularly in education, health, employment, natural resources, and development infrastructure, for which the public authorities must mobilise the required funds.

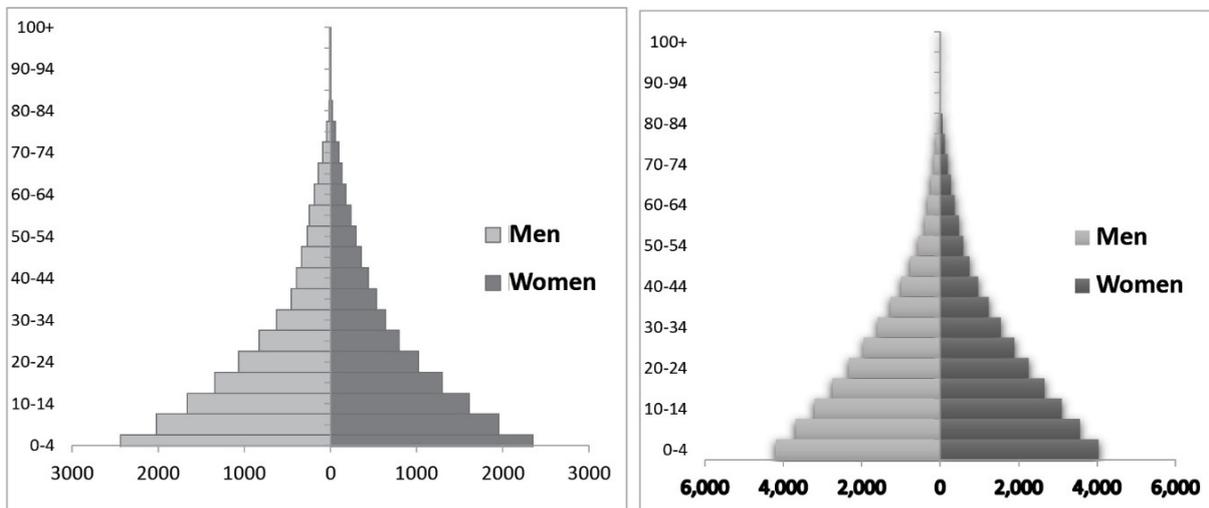
While there has been a continuous and notable decline in mortality in recent years, if the fertility level does not change or only changes slightly, Niger will have a population requiring health and education expenditure, for example, which will be difficult for the State to cover in the short and medium term. Moreover, Niger's economy is not able to cope with such a population. The resulting significant increase in social demand for education, health, labour resources, and jobs could lead to social and security crises.

2.2.2.State, age structure of the population and changes in social demand

It is important to note that, in all scenarios considered, Niger’s population will double by 2040 and, therefore, the specific needs of the populations will too. Thus, according to the United Nations’ intermediate scenario, between 2020 and 2040, Niger’s population would increase from 24.2 to 48.7 million (*Figure 12*). The 0-4 year-old population, the mortality rate of which determines the population’s health status and life expectancy, is also expected to almost double (multiplied by 1.7 times).

The same will be true for the school-age population (5-24 years) and the elderly (65 years and over). The doubling of school enrolments results in exponential demand for education, and public authorities must be prepared to cope with such a situation. The doubling in the numbers of children under 5 and older people are challenges that health systems must adapt to by introducing as many services and personnel as possible within this timeframe. The number of women of childbearing age is also doubling, leading to a demand for obstetric care that is also expected to more than double by 2040.

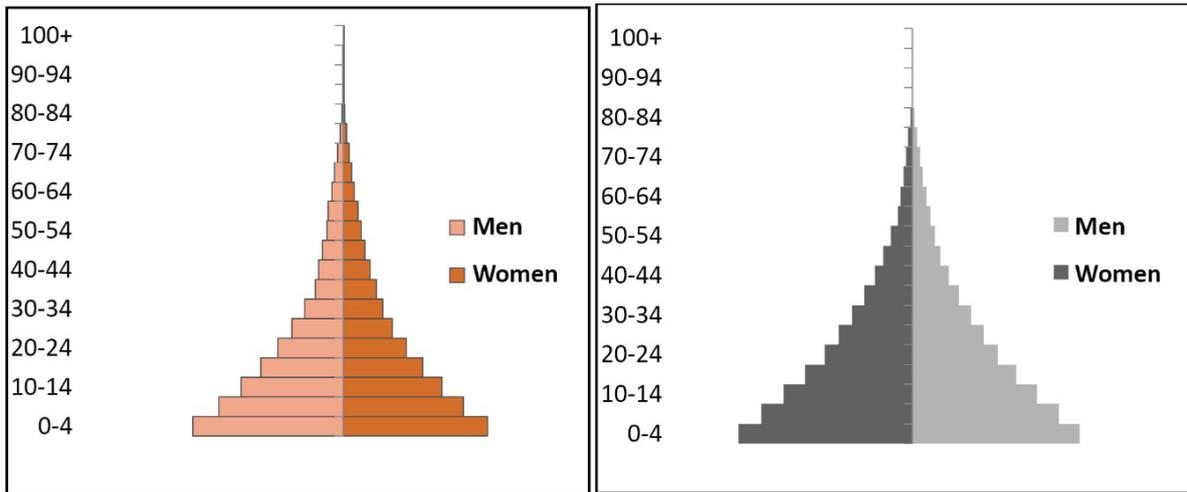
FIGURE 15: Niger’s age pyramids in 2020 and 2040 according to the United Nations “Average” scenario



According to the “HIGH” scenario, the population will increase from 24.2 to 50.9 million, slightly higher than twice (2.10) its size in 2020 (*Figure 13*). In this scenario, numbers of children under 5 years of age increase by 1.90, with numbers of school-age children more than doubling at all levels. The same

applies to the number of women of childbearing age. This creates greater challenges in terms of social efforts and expenditure than the “Medium” scenario and would require all services in all social sectors to be doubled.

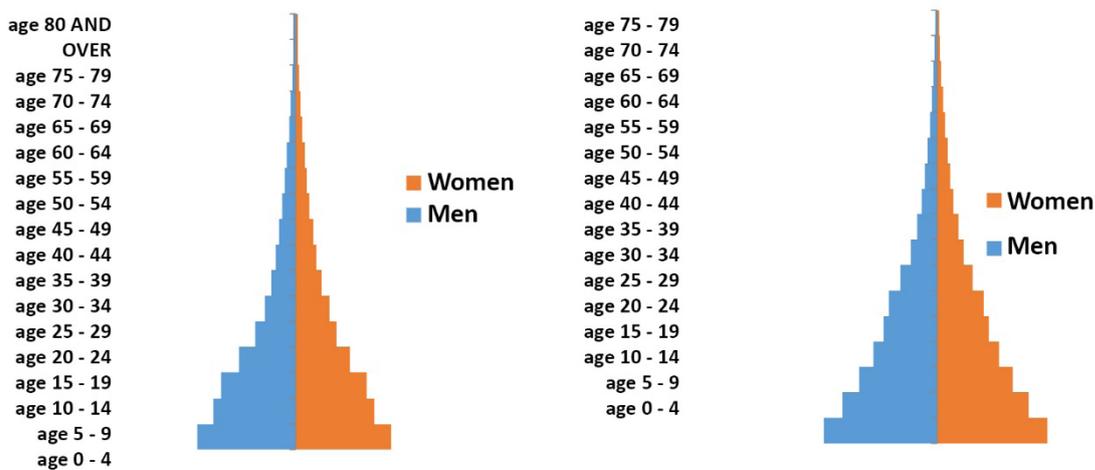
FIGURE 16: Niger's age pyramids in 2020 and 2040 according to the United Nations "High" scenario



In the INS scenario, which is between the UN "HIGH" and "constant fertility" scenarios, the population would increase from 23.2 million to 48.8 million between 2020 and 2040, a 2.11-fold increase (Figure

14). In addition, the number of children aged 0-4 years in 2040, school-age children, women of childbearing age, and dependent child age groups in general, would also double.

FIGURE 17: Niger's age pyramids in 2020 and 2040 according to the NSI scenario



Given that 83.8 per cent of Niger's population lives in rural areas and mainly works in agriculture, on which the country's GDP depends to a large extent, it is important to note that the population is still reliant on farming family property, which is continually divided and broken up into units to adapt to the growth of heirs. Therefore, these uncontrolled population dynamics will put a strain on agricultural productivity, which can no longer rely continuously on clearing areas shared with other farmers, herders, and other rural economic actors.

Another important fact with all these scenarios, except the constant fertility scenario, is the shift in the population's age structure towards the productive ages (Table 8). Indeed, even if the time-frame (2020 and 2040) is short to observe such a phenomenon, the projected decline in fertility is expected to significantly reduce youth dependency ratios, thus opening up opportunities to capture the demographic dividend, provided that this change is accompanied by investment in training, employment and infrastructure.

TABLE 8: Population growth rate between 2020 and 2040 by scenario

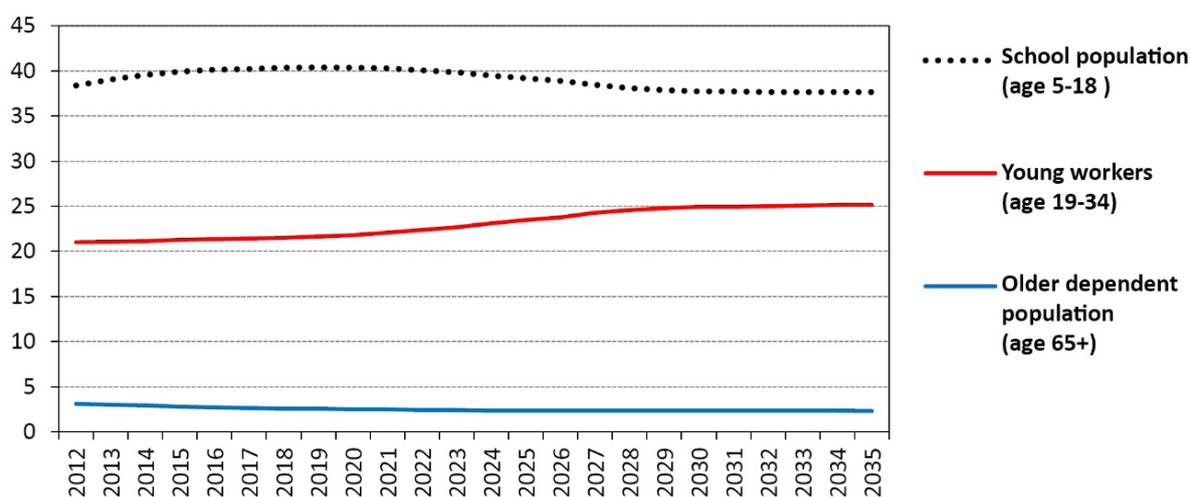
Scenario	Pop 20-40	age 0-4	age 5-14	age 15-19	age 20-24	15-64 years old	65+	Women age 15-49
Medium	2.01	1.72	1.87	2.05	2.20	2.23	1.98	2.22
HIGH	2.1	1.90	2.02	2.13	2.20	2.24	1.98	2.24
LOW	1.92	1.55	1.73	1.97	2.20	2.21	1.98	2.20
Constant Fertility	2.27	2.35	2.25	2.19	2.20	2.26	1.98	2.26
INS	2.11	2.04	1.96	2.01	2.29	2.24	1.95	2.21

2.3.Future social investment needs

The analysis of trends in the major age groups makes it possible to anticipate social investment needs by sector. In general, social needs will

continue to increase, but at different rates. Over the next 15 years, needs for education and the creation of jobs for young workers will remain a priority.

FIGURE 18 : Change in relative proportions (%) of specific age groups in the period 2012-2035, medium scenario, INS projections in Niger

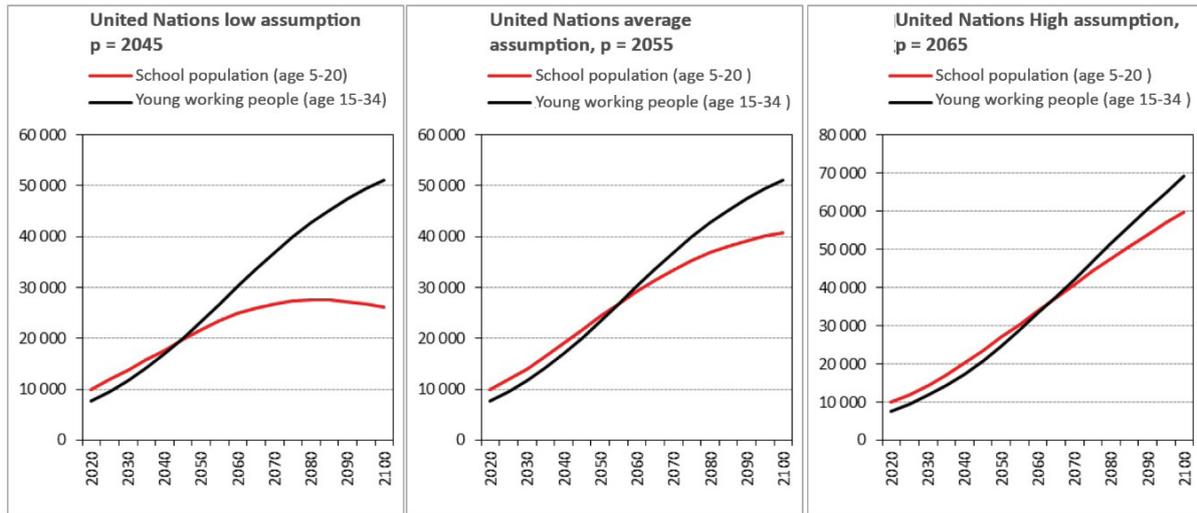


However, an examination of the changes in the relative importance of the different sectors shows that Niger is in a critical period in terms of social investment choices: from 2025 onwards, the proportion of young working people (19-34 years old) is expected to increase significantly to reach 25% of the total population, while the share of the school-age population (5-18 years old) would enter a phase of slight decline, which would continue until 2030. This pattern provides crucial information for stability policies in the years to come. It indicates that there is a need to foresee actions that can help contain this supply of young workers, who could turn to illegal or criminal activities in the absence of alternatives.

According to United Nations projections, sooner or later the needs for job creation for young people will inevitably take precedence over education needs (in terms of volume). The year in which this change varies according to the demographic scenarios. it could happen as early as 2045 (low assumption) or a decade later (medium assumption). Finally, the high hypothesis places this breaking point around 2065.

These benchmarks could be used to determine the volume and strategies for investments in the two important social areas of education and job creation for young workers.

FIGURE 19 : Dynamics of competing needs for job creation for young people and schooling, United Nations projections

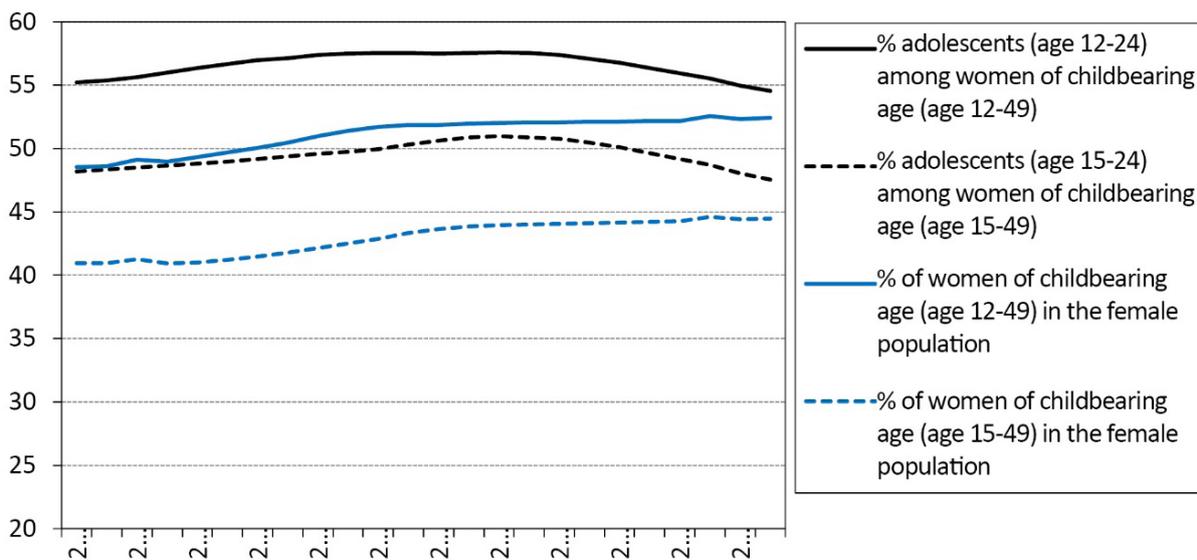


To prevent social unrest and instability, job creation for young workers is becoming a priority. However, limiting the growth of this population will require robust action to promote the reproductive health of women and adolescent girls in particular.

The reproductive health challenges will remain enormous. The proportion of women of childbearing

age in the total female population has recently begun to increase. This proportion will increase by about 5 percentage points by approximately 2035. On the other hand, the proportion of adolescent girls in the female population of childbearing age is currently stable and is expected to begin to decline from the 2030s onwards.

FIGURE 20: Proportion of women of childbearing age in the total female population and proportion of adolescents in the population of women of childbearing age (%), medium scenario, Niger INS projections



These dynamics could lead to a change in patterns of demand for maternal and reproductive health commodities and services.

Population growth and its consequences, such as urbanization and the availability or scarcity of resources, are therefore an important driver of violence in the Sahel and a key issue in establishing a security complex. Due to high demographic growth, the country will face significant gaps in all areas, and shortages lead to social crises and the emergence of armed groups, as the country is

currently experiencing. The demographic outlook indicates that there are greater needs to be met in terms of education, health, employment, etc.

Thus, for example, in 2040, to maintain safe conditions, the number of doctors needed to meet WHO standards varies between 5,086 and 4,664; similarly, there are substantial needs in the other categories of health workers (nurses, midwives, etc.) and education, as highlighted in the table below.

TABLE 9: Estimated health and education needs in 2040

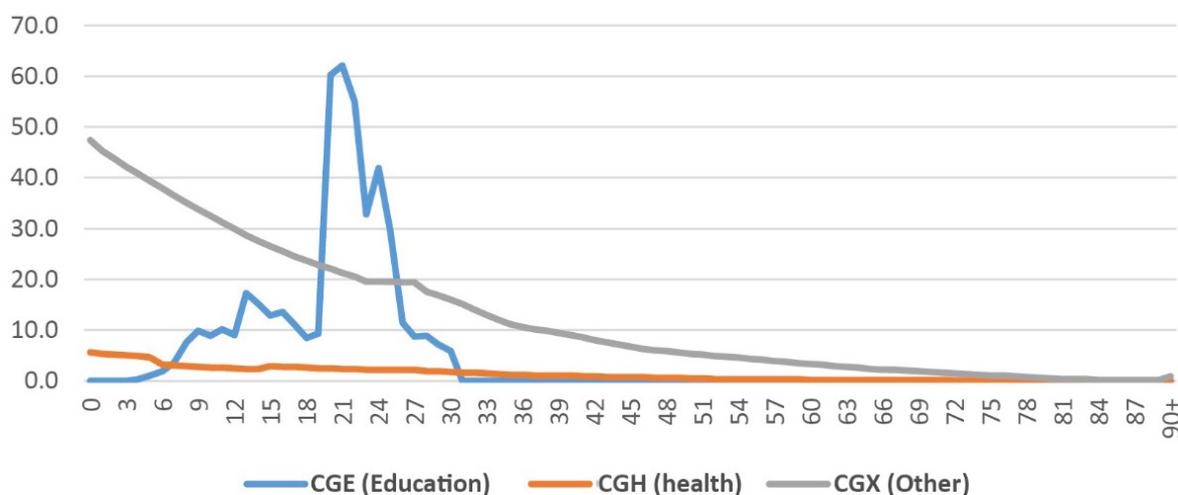
Scenario	population	Number of Doctors	Number of nurses	Number of midwives	Number of classes/teachers
UN_MEDUIM	48,745,862	4,875	9,749	2,145	676,871
UN_HIGH	50,859,303	5,086	10,172	2,238	706,218
UN_LOW	46,638,441	4,664	9,328	2,052	647,608
Constant_fertility	54,867,173	5,487	10,973	2,414	761,870
INS_SCEN	48,846,854	4,885	9,769	2,149	678,273

Estimated government and household expenditure will also be significant in 2040. It is estimated that 1,733 billion CFA francs will be spent on health, education and other social sectors. For example, to maintain the current level of education, even if the costs of investments remain at their 2015 levels, the government will have to spend 464 billion CFA francs, 84.5% of

which will go to education for 0-24 year olds.

Similarly, 118.9 billion CFA francs are needed for health, 55% of which would be for children aged 0-14. And 1,149.9 billion CFA francs in other government expenditure must be covered to continue to meet the population's social needs in 2040.

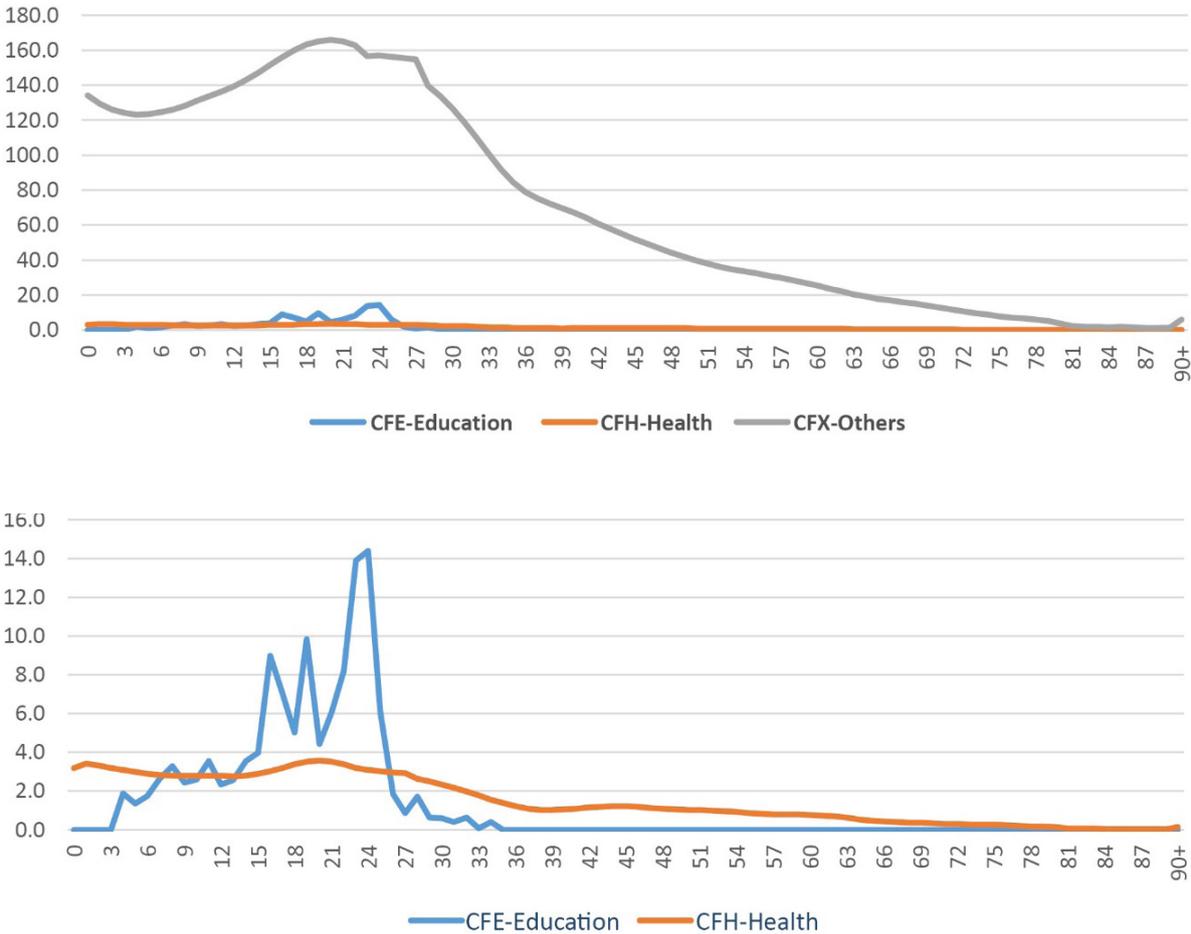
FIGURE 21: Public consumption in education, health, and others



The major changes in numbers will also place a burden on households in 2040. Household expenditure in 1940 will total 6,678 billion CFA francs

to maintain at least the 2015 levels, including 123 billion for education, 136 billion for health and 6,418 billion for other private household expenditure.

FIGURE 22: Public consumption in education, health, and others



Estimates highlight enormous needs in education, health, employment, and other areas of consumption, as well as needs of populations. If this situation is not maintained by strong and

effective measures, it will inevitably lead to higher levels of unemployment, conflicts over resources, and it could also lead to community or even armed conflict.

3. CURRENT POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES AND PROSPECTS FOR A SUSTAINABLE RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEMS OF FRAGILITY AND INSECURITY

Over the next 20 years (until 2040), Niger will experience significant population growth, which will mask its economic and social development efforts, as the social needs to be met will be so great. If an average population growth rate of 3% is maintained, it would take 35 years to double GDP per capita (Guengant, 2011). Population projections have shown that Niger would be in this situation regardless of the current scenario. Lower population growth would therefore reduce the time it takes to double GDP per capita, especially since economic growth rates are low.

Moreover, whatever the scenario, Niger's population growth will be unmanageable as the foundations of population dynamics are so deeply rooted, and the country will have to face considerable challenges in the coming years because of the inescapable legacy of the past. High fertility levels are the result of couples' preferences for large families, which are built and sustained around values and beliefs that still equate children with economic and social wealth, the numbers of which matter. Despite the hypotheses and downward trends in fertility, the proportion of young people under 20 years of age will be between 54 and 60 per cent of the total population. This will represent a significant burden for the active age groups, which must provide these young people with education (at primary, secondary and higher levels, etc.).

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the country must create the necessary conditions to guarantee, firstly, its economic and social development and, secondly, a better future for future generations. Achieving these objectives requires action in several areas: controlling population growth, training human capital, creating jobs, promoting youth employment, developing economic infrastructure, and modernising agriculture. All these actions are aimed at ensuring a peaceful and safe social environment.

The country is aware of these demographic challenges, and all the strategies currently being implemented are focused on controlling population growth. The SDDCI, PDES and PNP policies, in addition to others, all share the same principle, to control population growth.

Accordingly, the country must implement various key actions, particularly in the areas of family planning and human capital development and reorganise its rural economy.

3.1. Key actions to control population growth

Demographics are putting unbearable pressure on land, employment, and the economy. Therefore, the term "birth spacing" must be replaced by an effective birth control practice. To begin, the country must do everything possible to ensure that the United Nations' "LOW" fertility-reduction assumptions are realised, as this would allow it to reduce its dependency ratio through:

- reduction through awareness raising, communication and education about the desired number of children for women and men, which currently stands at 9 for women and 11 for men;
- promotion of access to care, particularly family planning and maternal health, through local and free services, considering the doubling staff numbers and needs in the near future;
- increased funding for health in the national budget and increased mobilization of external resources;
- improving the demand for planning among the population in response to the challenges and issues of soaring demographic growth.

3.2. Key actions to develop human capital

It should be noted that the demographic transformation brought about by fertility reduction results in potential for development in this case, a high working-age population proportion. However, capturing the demographic dividend also requires appropriate macroeconomic policies and a secure and enabling environment for development. It must be accompanied by:

- training of human capital, in particular education and health: to this end, education at all levels (primary and secondary, higher, and vocational) must be promoted. It should be free of charge, provided to all, considering the doubling of staff numbers when allocating budgets;
- the change in population structure and training must be accompanied by structural investments to create productive jobs for trained young people and the restructuring of the economy by organising the informal sector, which absorbs surplus labour that cannot find opportunities in the rural and/or modern sector. Indeed, young people who cannot find jobs are an important and attractive target for criminal organizations, terrorists, petty crime, and organised crime.
- the promotion of strategies for women's empowerment through communication aimed at changing the position of women and girls in society, who were primarily regarded as mothers in the past.

3.3. Key actions to reorganise the rural economy

Land conflicts account for the majority of the disputes between rural populations and fuel armed

conflicts. This is as much a reality between farmers as it is between farmers and other rural operators due to demographic pressure. Overcoming the security issues requires reorganising this rural world, which is home to more than 80% of the population, has the country's highest demographic growth and makes the largest contribution to GDP, and fluctuations in its value depend on it.

Rural Niger has experienced several droughts, associated with severe shortages and famines. These phenomena have become more frequent in recent years due to increasingly irregular rainfall and population pressure. The rapid increase in population, which involves expanding cultivated areas, using more and more marginal land for planting and reducing, or even eliminating, regenerative fallowing, has led to an increase in erosion, accelerated desertification and deforestation, and recurrent conflicts between farmers and herders. In this sector, it is necessary to:

- take into account that population growth can no longer be balanced by reliance on new land. As this system is no longer sustainable, there is an urgent need to switch to new methods to improve agricultural productivity;
- organise rural farming, since farmers often lack the means to invest in new technologies and are reluctant to adopt them because of ignorance and insecurity;
- take women into consideration and organise their effective participation in land ownership and rural production;
- organise and structure the coexistence of all actors in the rural economy and develop strategies for adapting to climate change and population growth.

3.4. Actions in response to current and future challenges

To effectively meet the main challenges, the SDDCI includes six (6) strategic areas of action, including (i) territorial security, (ii) modernising the State, (iii) developing human capital, (iv) boosting and modernising the rural world, (v) developing a dynamic private sector, and (vi) demographic transition.

To meet all these challenges, the Nigerien State intends to build on the new National Population Policy (PNP), the objective of which is to control the drivers of population growth in Niger by promoting responsible parenthood among the population, i.e. the capacity of families to form their families according to their means and in the exclusive interest of their children. In line with sectoral policies, the PNP aims to capture the demographic dividend by accelerating the demographic transition, human capital development and employment.

However, a significant decline in the rate of population growth requires real institutional and social mobilization. Within this framework, three

strategic areas were highlighted: (i) controlling population growth, (ii) strengthening the quality of human capital and (iii) improving the empowerment of women.

The demographic objectives also focus on reducing high-risk pregnancies, which will fall from 83%, according to the 2012 Demographic and Health Survey (EDSN), to 40% in 2035. Particular emphasis will also be placed on improving the quality of human capital with, ultimately, a gross enrolment rate in lower secondary education that will increase from 34% in 2015-2016 to 66% in 2035-2036. The empowerment of women will also increase. It will be measured by the percentage of working women, which will rise from 25%, according to the 2012 EDSN, to 70% in 2035.

Most of these actions will be systematically scheduled in the national economic and social development plan (PDES) on a five-year basis and monitored as part of the implementation of the PNP. The resources needed to implement, monitor, and evaluate these measures still need to be secured.



CONCLUSION

As some authors have pointed out, the challenges associated with high population growth in the Sahel countries are becoming more acute and therefore appear to be far-reaching (May and Guengant, 2015; ECA, 2017). Niger's population currently has a high proportion of young people. In 2020, more than 80% of the population is under 35 years of age. The population projections of both the National Institute of Statistics and the United Nations show, in their medium assumptions, that this proportion would remain stable until 2035. This prospect clearly has substantial social implications.

As current fertility levels are stable (between 6 and 7 children per woman), the demographic explosion of young working people appears inevitable. At present, the Nigerien State cannot do without bold measures, including creating and strengthening family planning services. In addition, these human resources need to be turned into real human capital through education and skills training. Niger will thus have to guarantee a better future for its young and constantly growing population. However, this can only be achieved if it improves its human capital (education and health) and also creates jobs in the formal and informal sectors. Due to a lack of prospects, young people, who generally have a low level of education, take refuge in the informal sector, which acts as a safety valve since it absorbs the surplus of often low-skilled labour.

If decisions are not made to contribute to the economic empowerment of young people, especially women, idleness will leave them vulnerable to the risk of joining armed groups or even engaging in other criminal activities. This exponential population growth may thus constitute a breeding ground for recruitment to terrorist groups. If it is not addressed, population growth could thus be a source of conflict and insecurity in the country.

Furthermore, the country must also handle the current situation and take appropriate measures to combat terrorism by strengthening its conflict management and prevention mechanisms.

In rural areas, development deficits are still linked to physical conditions such as low rainfall, poor soil quality and poor water coverage. They are aggravated by the exceptional natural increase in population.

Achieving sustainable development and ending the vicious cycle of poverty and social crisis requires not only controlling population growth in order to increase savings and make investments, but also improving governance of public management, strengthening human capital and creating jobs for young people on a massive scale.

Building the Niger of the future in peace, security, with dialogue and social cohesion, will therefore depend on achieving the objectives of the SDDCI and, above all, on the new national population policy.

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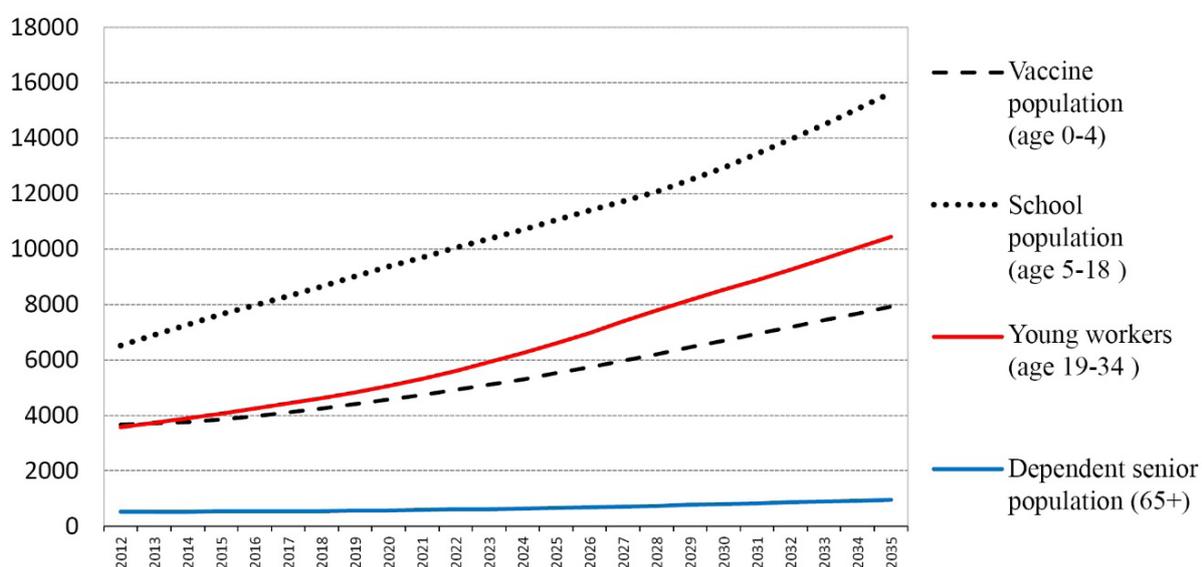
ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Changes in the median age of the population in selected regions and countries between 1960 and 2020

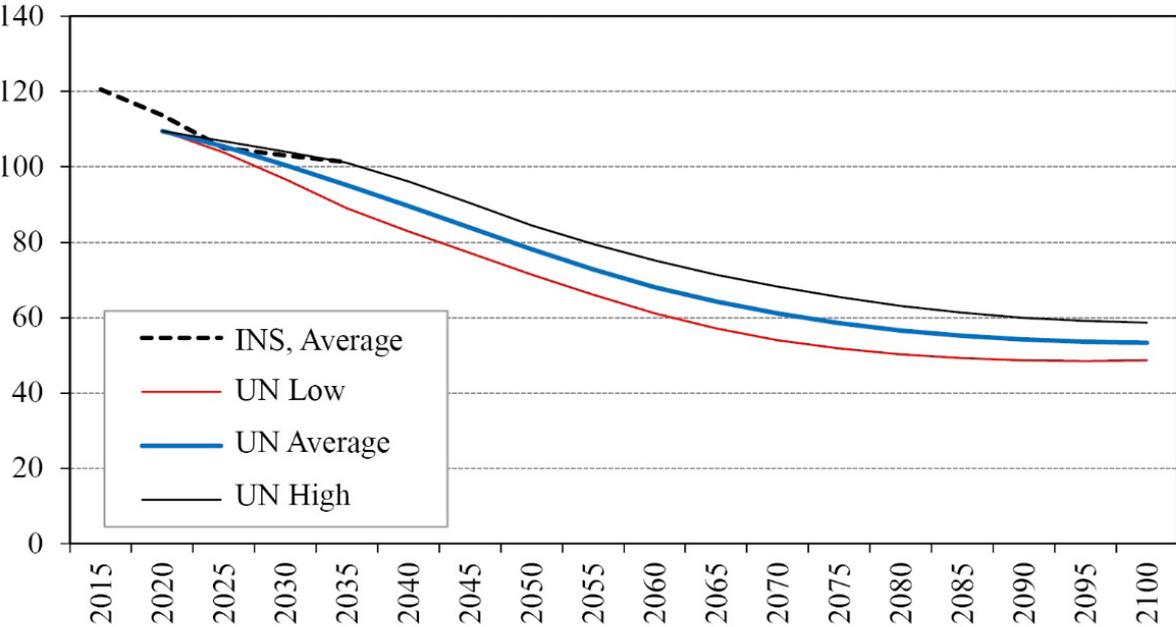
Regions	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
World	22.6	22.0	21.5	21.9	22.6	23.3	24.0	25.1	26.3	27.4	28.5	29.6	30.9
Europe	30.3	30.9	31.7	32.1	32.6	33.5	34.6	36.1	37.7	39.1	40.3	41.4	42.5
Sub-Saharan Africa	18.6	18.3	17.9	17.6	17.4	17.2	17.2	17.4	17.6	17.8	17.9	18.2	18.7
Chad	19.9	19.2	18.6	18.2	17.5	16.8	16.2	15.8	15.5	15.4	15.6	16.0	16.6
Burkina Faso	19.1	18.8	18.3	17.8	17.1	16.6	16.3	16.3	16.4	16.6	16.7	17.0	17.6
Mali	19.5	19.3	18.8	18.5	17.9	17.4	16.5	16.5	16.6	16.5	16.2	16.0	16.3
Niger	15.8	15.6	15.6	15.7	16.0	15.7	15.8	16.0	15.9	15.4	15.0	14.9	15.2
Northern Africa	18.7	17.8	17.6	17.7	18.0	18.5	19.0	19.9	21.2	22.7	24.0	24.8	25.5
Eastern and South-Eastern Asia	21.2	20.1	19.7	20.5	21.9	23.4	24.7	26.8	29.1	31.4	33.4	34.9	36.6

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019, custom data acquired via website.

ANNEX 2: Changes in the number of employees in the major groups in the period 2012-2035, medium scenario, Niger INS projections



ANNEX 3: Changes in the dependency ratio according to different sources and scenarios in Niger between 2015 and 2100







Demography, Peace and Security in the Sahel
UNFPA, West and Central Africa Regional Office
Immeuble Wolle Ndiaye, Almadies
BP: 21090 Dakar-Ponty SENEGAL
Fax : +221 33 820 17 31
Website: <http://wcaro.unfpa.org>
Email : wcaro.office@unfpa.org

