

Niamey, Niger, April 7 (Infosplusgabon) – Nigerien President Issoufou Mahamadou on Sunday said he was pleased with the positive assessment of his renaissance programme, as the government managed to raise 10,000 billion CFAF for its implementation.

In an exclusive interview on national television on the occasion of his eighth anniversary as Nigerien president, Mahamadou said the Renaissance Programme focused around eight priorities, namely, promoting cultural renaissance; continuing the strengthening of democratic institutions; tightening the security of people and goods; and guaranteeing water access for all, among others.

The programme also aims to ensure food and nutritional security, develop communication and energy infrastructure, and develop social sectors: education and health and promote youth employment.

President Issoufou also said that “the promises made in the programme on the basis of which he was held are honoured”, citing the achievement of infrastructure as well in the capital Niamey as in the different regions, the establishment of strong institutions and the initiative “Nigeriens feed Nigeriens”, and “In Niger, drought is no longer synonym of famine”, said president Issoufou.

Stressing the cultural renaissance, which is one of the main lines of his programme, President Issoufou called on Nigeriens to change their behaviours by banning certain habits.

However, he said that the demographic issue still remained despite the progress made in the improvement of the synthetic fecundity index which dropped from six children per woman to 5.6 children.

“That tendency must be strengthened through the schooling and literacy of girls particularly,” insisted President Issoufou.

The Nigerien president said he was satisfied with the efforts made by the defence and security forces in their mission of protection of national territory.

“The Nigerien army is classified third at the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) which counts 15 States,” he said.

He stated that 25 percent of the country’s budget resource was devoted to security expenditure but seeing certain contingencies, “we devote 19% of the budget presently”.

Despite those constraints, the Nigerien army fulfills perfectly its defence and securization mission on the territory in a troubled regional context.

At the economic level, President Issoufou said that “the country recorded an average growth rate of 6 percent over the past eight years, adding that the International Monetary Fund classified Niger 144th on the basis of its standard of living.

President Issoufou reaffirmed his intention to hand over power to another Nigerien by holding free and fair elections in 2021, calling all Nigerien political class to end their divergences and work for the victory of democracy.

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