

**Speech by Student Representative Segbedji Favi Geraldo on the occasion of visit of  
Germany'S Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Annalena Baerbock, on April 13, 2022.**

**Venue: Nouvelle Salle at Université Abdou Moumouni, Niamey Niger**

Your Excellency, the Chancellor of Abdou Moumouni University of Niamey,

The Excellency, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the **Federal Republic of Germany**

Excellency, the Minister of Foreign Affairs **of the Republic of Niger**,

Your Excellency, the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research **of the Republic of Niger**,

Excellency, the Ambassador of the **Federal Republic of Germany** in Niger,

Honourable, the Deans of the Faculties of Abdou Moumouni University,

Honourable Directors of the Centres of Excellence under the German cooperation,

Dear Lecturers and Researchers,

Dear colleagues and distinguished guests

All protocols observed

**Good Afternoon / Evening to you all**

It is a **privilege and great pleasure** to address you this **afternoon/ evening** to welcome you **most warmly** as honourable guests to the University of Abdou Moumouni, on behalf of all students, graduates, and alumni who benefit from the German partners' scholarship program in Niger.

**Soyez les bienvenus ;** In local languages we say « **Wa Koubayni** » ; or « **Barka Da Zouwa** »

**Nelson Mandela** once said :

**"EDUCATION IS THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON WHICH CAN BE USED TO CHANGE THE WORLD."**

Indeed, education is one of the first steps for people to access knowledge, critical thinking, empowerment, and skills needed **to make a community a better place to live**. Consequently, investing in youth education is a bold step in preparing the next generation to face the challenges of developing a nation.

Despite Africa's abundant renewable energy resources, the continent is still developing and mainly relies on fossil fuels. Nevertheless, in the green energy transition framework, we would like to highlight that Germany is on the right continent and with the right partner in contributing to **both partners' energy security**.

The German corporation has **also** understood the value of education and has been investing in Africa's capacity, especially the youth from West Africa, for years now. To this end, more than 140 benefit from the German cooperation scholarship in Niger through various programmes and initiatives. As a result of this **determined and continuous support** from Germany, a lot of **progress has** been made in terms of knowledge transfer, **enhancement** of the lectures and students' capacity, and contribution to scientific knowledge.

As a matter of fact, over the recent years, something that **can be easily perceived** is the **increasing number of scientific research papers** on developments and climate change issues in the region **published** by researchers and students from the German sponsored centres across the region.

**"We would like to thank the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the German Ministry of Education and Research for making this possible and giving research in the region a facelift in contributing to a better future."**

**It is worth noting the critical role our local institutions play;** We would like to thank Heads of German and African Universities and of DAAD excellence centres, Directors and staff of projects such as the West African Science Service Centre on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use (also called WASCAL), and the West African Centre for Sustainable Rural Transformation, which have been funded by BMBF and DAAD and CEGLA, and Pro Ruwa for providing **a standard curriculum that addresses our modern-day problems** and creating a platform for students to prove and **express their fullest** potential.

Dear Minister, **we, the “products”** of these centres, **are already taking the baton to lead changes** in our various countries and across the world. Indeed, Graduates of these centres work in multidisciplinary areas in local and international organizations (such as UNDP, GIZ, African Development Bank) and others in research centres or entrepreneurship. This is due to their efforts **supported** by the quality of education and practical skills acquired **from** the centres.

**"TO WHOM MUCH IS GIVEN, MUCH IS EXPECTED"**

Dear German partners,

I would like to inform you that, as we **receive from you**, we are also giving back to our communities through the Climate and Sustainable Development Action Club (CSDAC), created in 2018 by students from two projects funded by the German government, namely the West African Centre for Sustainable Rural Transformation in Ghana and Niger and WASCAL under the mentorship of **Prof Rabani Adamou, to whom, we remain grateful.**

The Climate and Sustainable Development Action Club is a multidisciplinary community of young researchers from 12 African countries **whose VISION** is to build a Climate-resilient rural Africa and environmentally conscious people driven by Sustainable development actions and strategies. The

Climate and Sustainable Development Action Club also works to strengthen and promote leadership and empowerment of young Africans, especially women, to contribute to our continent's development, starting from the Republic of Niger.

Since its creation in 2018, the Climate and Sustainable Development Action Club , through 8 projects, has directly impacted **1330** people, especially youth and women in Niger, and indirectly about **20,000** persons on our social media platforms Facebook and youtube.

I want to express my **sincerest** gratitude to all of you who generously helped us make this **happen**.

**We couldn't have done it without you, and together, we will continue to do more!**

As I conclude, I would like to highlight our expectations for the coming years:

- Dear Minister, We would like to invite **you and your team** to **consolidate the ongoing initiatives** (knowledge and technology transfer, technical capacity building and laboratories, etc...) **and cooperate why not go beyond!** The world is facing several challenges **and these** calls for more collaborative actions where research can play a major role.
- Our German partners, **we kindly ask** you to encourage your companies in Niger to establish early career programs to harness the skills of young graduates from the German sponsored centres.
- To the Coordinators of excellence centres and WASCAL, it **is urgent** to integrate **career development and coaching modules** for graduate students **into your curricula** to facilitate their integration into the job market.
- And finally, Dear Colleagues, our journey will **chalk** a lot of successes. However, we will also face a lot of failures to become experts and address the challenges of our communities

through integrated and sustainable approaches. And we must start now because we can, and no one can solve our problems better than we. **Most of all, our fullest potential to deliver is** when we put our hands and minds together.

With all these, "**The sky is the limit.**"

Thank you very much for your kind attention, and once again,

**WELCOME TO ABDOU MOUMOUNI UNIVERSITY**