



The Republic of Niger ranked the lowest out of 186 on the [United Nations' Human Development Index](#), which was published recently, ex-aequo with DR Congo

However progress has been made and despite its low score in this index, it had the 10th fastest average human development growth between 2000 and 2012.

In an interview, Fodé Nidaye, the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Niger, points out that maternal and child mortality has decreased, the country's democracy index rank has increased and its status has changed from "authoritarian" to "hybrid regime", placing it on the "better" half of sub-Saharan countries. More children are now enrolled in schools.

Niger: On the bottom but showing progress

Monday, 15 April 2013 14:18

Niger is Western African state, which faces multiple challenges, as it remains handicapped by its landlocked position, desert terrain, poor education, high poverty rate, its lack of infrastructure, poor health care, and environmental degradation.

Mr Foé Nidaye says that in addition, the Sahel and Mali crisis have added to the burden, and the country has to cope with both IDP's as well as refugees from Mali.

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