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MI KOUABÔ – O FO NAKAYO!

Welcome to Cotonou. We are pleased to welcome the 2017 edition of the Sahel and West Africa Week to Benin.

The eradication of hunger and malnutrition and the improvement of the well-being of the most vulnerable people – in both rural and urban areas – are priorities for our government. The number and diversity of policies and programmes underway that aim to improve food security and promote good nutrition illustrate this ambition. The second generation of the National Agricultural Investment Programme for Food and Nutrition Security (NAIP-FNS), and the Multisectoral Programme for Food, Health and Nutrition (PMASN) demonstrate the Beninese government's on-going commitment to find structural solutions to food and nutrition challenges.

Indeed, Benin has made substantial progress in its fight against hunger. It has reduced its hunger index score by 20 points, from 44.5 in 1992 to 24.4 in 2017. Our country is on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal – SDG 2 – by 2030.



Nevertheless, we know that there is still an enormous amount of work left to do. The latest surveys (MICS, 2014) have shown us that one out of every three children across the country continue to suffer from stunting. That is a call to action for us to make more long-term structural investments – especially in a regional and international macro-economic context characterised by recurring security and migration crises. Food, nutrition and resilience issues are inherently transnational and they are a part of the solution to security and stability challenges. Benin and other countries in the region must join forces to reinstate these issues at the centre of development agendas.

Given the multi-factorial and multi-sectoral nature of food, nutrition and resilience issues, we are also seeking to improve the efficiency of our interventions. We have established monitoring, dialogue and outreach institutions, including the National Food and Nutrition Council – the 2017 Sahel and West Africa Week's focal point institution.

The special event dedicated to Benin on 7 December will be an opportunity to share some of our concrete commitments. Our hope is that these discussions will offer our countries in the region an opportunity for mutual sharing and peer learning.

Let's be resourceful, inspired and generous – let's share our knowledge and enjoy the intense moments of informal discussion and networking throughout this Week, which will undoubtedly be rich in debates and discoveries.