



IN PARTNERSHIP



# Press Release

*Paris and Niamey, January 19, 2018*

**Empow'Her and Veolia have committed to a unique partnership to promote the emancipation of women and protect the environment in Niger**



**In response to environmental issues and the immense challenge around combating poverty – above all affecting women in Niger – Empow'Her – an international organization supporting women's entrepreneurship – and Veolia have just inaugurated L'Oasis in Niamey. This space supports the economic integration of women through entrepreneurship and raises the population's awareness of sustainable development issues.**

A unique space in Niamey, Niger, it is dedicated to social engagement and the responsible economy. Co-created by Empow'Her and Veolia, supported by the Group's Foundation and its subsidiary, Société d'Exploitation des Eaux du Niger, L'Oasis takes its cue from Paris, inspired by the REcyclerie, an experimental site involving civil society in environmental protection, and with which Veolia has been a partner since it opened four years ago.

L'Oasis has a dual aim:

- **Support the economic integration of women through entrepreneurship** by boosting their ability to create and develop lasting companies which generate value, and by supporting women who have a project liable to have a positive impact on the environment and maternal health
- **Raise the population's awareness of sustainable development issues** by helping people understand sustainable development challenges, learn about the potential solutions and take an active role in protecting the environment.

Officially inaugurated today in the presence of Dr. Lalla Malika Issoufou, First Lady of Niger and patron of L'Oasis, this 1,000-m<sup>2</sup> eco-responsible space is focused on recycling, recovery and planting along the same lines as the REcyclerie. It includes training and collaborative working areas that can accommodate up to 40 resident entrepreneurs, creativity areas, a discussion space (projection equipment, library, etc.), and an ecological vegetable garden that will be used to educate people and raise their awareness of sustainable farming.

Its design was developed locally with the assistance of artists and entrepreneurs, in particular the Nigerien artist Diassibo Tchiombiano, and volunteers from “Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement” (Young Volunteers for the Environment).

L'Oasis also aims to create employment in Niger, in particular through support and training programs targeting women entrepreneurs.

*“The success of the REcyclerie in Paris is worth adapting to other regions and really comes into its own in Niger,”* says Martine Vullierme, Senior Vice President Africa and Middle East at Veolia and Director of L'Oasis. *“Together, Veolia and Empow'Her have co-built this project with our partners to ensure that the actions of L'Oasis are principally focused on environmental awareness and training for women.”*

Founder of Empow'Her and Director of L'Oasis, Soazig Barthélémy, adds, *“We are very happy to extend Empow'Her's activities to Niger. Women in this country have extraordinary creative potential, and it is absolutely essential to support them and allow them to develop their creativity and their entrepreneurial spirit. Having co-developed this project with Veolia is a real opportunity for us to provide our expertise in assisting a unique project with its focus on both women and the environment.”*

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**Empow'Her** is a social organization working to empower women worldwide. Convinced that entrepreneurialism is a powerful lever to support the emancipation of women and their full participation in the development of their community, we instigate training, leadership, reinforcement and network development for entrepreneurial women. We believe that each woman has the right and the ability to improve her economic status and her well-being, and to contribute to life in society. So far, we have worked with and supported more than 1,000 women across some 10 countries, helping them invigorate their company, to feel more confident in their role, and to look to a better future for themselves and their community.

**Veolia** group is the global leader in optimized resource management. With over 163 000 employees worldwide, the Group designs and provides water, waste and energy management solutions that contribute to the sustainable development of communities and industries. Through its three complementary business activities, Veolia helps to develop access to resources, preserve available resources, and to replenish them.

In 2016, the Veolia group supplied 100 million people with drinking water and 61 million people with wastewater service, produced 54 million megawatt hours of energy and converted 30 million metric tons of waste into new materials and energy. Veolia Environnement (listed on Paris Euronext: VIE) recorded consolidated revenue of €24.39 billion in 2016. [www.veolia.com](http://www.veolia.com)

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