

Declaration by the Sahel Alliance – General Assembly**N'Djamena – 15 February 2021**

We, the representatives of the Sahel Alliance members, convened in N'djamena on the 15th of February 2021, for the second General Assembly of the Sahel Alliance. This meeting allowed us to report on the achievements of the Sahel Alliance in 2020, to deepen the dialogue with the G5 Sahel in a spirit of transparency and mutual accountability, and to formulate strategic orientations for effective, concerted interventions, aligned with the development priorities of our partners and integrated within the framework of the Coalition for the Sahel.

The Sahel Alliance brings together 25 bilateral and multilateral development partners (14 full members and 11 observers) united by a common vision, which is consistent with the 2030 Agenda of sustainable development and targets a sustainable improvement of the living conditions of the Sahelian populations. In this regard, we welcome the accession of Norway, Ireland and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) respectively as member and observers in 2020.

We, members of the Sahel Alliance recognize that:

- 1. The Sahel Alliance was built around a strong partnership with the G5 Sahel countries, which translates into many concrete results in line with the commitments made.*

The Sahel Alliance members pledged to strengthen their support and to place their actions within the G5 Sahel priorities (Integrated Framework for Prioritized Actions - CAPI), to accelerate the implementation of projects, particularly for the benefit of the most vulnerable areas and populations. They thereby contribute to the financing of the Priority Investment Programme (PIP) of the G5 Sahel to the tune of €1.8 billion, of which €266 million are earmarked for the Emergency Development Programme (PDU).

In 3 years, building on a strong partnership between G5 Sahel countries and the Sahel Alliance, concrete and tangible results have been achieved, particularly in terms of access to essential services. Thanks to the projects of the Sahel Alliance, 550,000 people have had access to electricity, 1.6 million people have benefited from sanitation services and 5.5 million people have benefited from drinking water supply. In terms of food security and health, the Alliance has enabled 2.9 million people to benefit from food assistance, 3.4 million children to be vaccinated and 660,000 women of childbearing age to benefit from a family planning method. In the field of training and professional integration, 515,000 producers and breeders have been supported, 420,000 young people have benefited from vocational training, 2,400 judges, lawyers and clerks have been trained and 1,250 civil society organisations have been supported. These results are testament to a growing commitment and more effective intervention mechanisms on the part of the Alliance's members. Thus, since its launch in 2017, the number of funded projects has doubled, as have the financial commitments (from €7.3 to €16.9 billion) and the amounts disbursed.

In addition, the Presidency of the General Assembly has committed itself to strengthening the dialogue between the Sahel Alliance and the G5 Sahel Governments through visits to each of the G5 countries and exchanges at the highest level.

Despite the intensified effort and a review showing significant progress, crises persist, and vulnerabilities are increasing in some regions. This observation calls on the G5 Governments, supported by the members of the Sahel Alliance, to do more and better. To strengthen the coherence of our interventions, to increase the leverage effect of mobilised funding and the impact of projects on the

ground, we reaffirm our commitment to increase co-financing and joint projects, to favour flexible and streamlined implementation procedures and to reduce the transaction costs of our interventions for our partners. In this respect, we welcome the implementation of the Lake Chad and Liptako-Gourma Facilities and the forthcoming launch of the new Sahel-Alliance-financing instrument.

2. Efforts in terms of mutual accountability must be pursued

In line with the commitments made at their first General Assembly, the Sahel Alliance members agreed to set up a framework for exchanges with the G5 Sahel countries in order to strengthen, in a spirit of transparency and mutual accountability, the dialogue on public policies and priority sectoral reforms. Progress must be assessed against rigorous, concrete and measurable targets and indicators. This framework will be implemented on an experimental basis in Chad, the current presidency of the G5 Sahel in 2021. It is based on a flexible approach so that it can be adapted to the specificities and public policy priorities of the other G5 Sahel countries.

3. The COVID-19 pandemic represents a major challenge for the G5 Sahel countries.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated an already complex and fragile situation, with negative and lasting consequences for the health, economy and food security of Sahelian countries. The members of the Sahel Alliance strongly supported the response plans implemented by the G5 Sahel States, particularly to address the health and food emergency, but also to mitigate the social and economic impacts of the pandemic, including on the debt. They are committed to stepping up these joint efforts to strengthen public health and social protection services and inclusive economic recovery, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable, displaced and conflict-affected populations and to the debt issue.

4. The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus must lie at the heart of our actions.

It is crucial to both meet the most pressing needs of the population and to address the root causes of fragilities. The various crises that adversely impact the Sahel countries require a multisectoral and integrated approach, tailored to the specificities of each territory, that combines security, consolidation and prevention interventions.

Therefore, the members of the Alliance have resolutely committed to implement an Integrated Territorial Approach (ATI), which modalities are described in the note annexed to this declaration. Aligned with the principles of action prescribed by the CAPI, adopted at the G5 Sahel Summit in February 2020, this approach aims to intervene in the Sahel's vulnerable areas in a coordinated manner while taking account of the priorities of national and local government, local communities, and the interventions of partners in the humanitarian, development, stabilisation and security sectors. In 2020, the priority areas for the implementation of this approach were defined and agreed in concertation between the members of the Alliance and the G5 countries. Operational planning processes, taking into account the mapping of the partners' actions at the level of each territory, are now underway. The ATI will be implemented in close collaboration with the Partnership for Security and Stabilisation in the Sahel (P3S), within the framework of the Coalition for the Sahel.

5. There is an urgent need to ensure the effective return of the state and population access to essential services in the most fragile areas.

The deployment of the state in the most fragile areas is essential to restore security and ensure the delivery of public services to the population. The members of the Alliance support the presence in fragile areas of an inclusive, transparent and protective rule of law that upholds human rights, guarantees justice and good governance, fights corruption and impunity, delivers quality basic services and is capable of restoring and maintaining the trust of citizens in their public institutions. To achieve this,

convinced that the local authorities are best positioned to ensure the delivery of essential services and to bring elected officials and administrations closer to citizens, the members of the Sahel Alliance support and encourage the processes of decentralisation and deconcentration, accompanied by a transfer of the necessary competences and means to the local level.

The Sahel Alliance will support the actions of the G5 Sahel countries for a rapid return and the sustainable provision of public services in the most vulnerable areas, in close coordination with the G5 Sahel Executive Secretariat, the Coalition for the Sahel and the Partnership for Stability and Security in the Sahel (P3S). In these areas, it will pay increased attention to the most vulnerable population and to youth, their education and training, as well as their social and economic integration to support the G5 countries efforts to restore their confidence in the future.

6. Gender equality and women's rights advocacy must be promoted, safeguarded and recognised.

The development of the G5 Sahel countries will be sustainable only if it is more inclusive of women. The Sahel Alliance has renewed its commitment to gender equality and the defence of women's rights on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 "Women, Peace and Security". The members of the Sahel Alliance call in the annexed declaration to support the efforts of the G5 Sahel countries to accelerate the implementation of this resolution and the followings, thus advancing gender equality, the level of women's empowerment – including through better access to the health and education services they need - and representation, their involvement in mediation and conflict management processes.

7. The private sector is an essential vector of stability and development.

The Sahel is a dynamic region, with a young and enterprising population, and also a large market with considerable potential for opportunities, provided that the competitiveness of economic stakeholders is strengthened and private investment is encouraged and diversified. This is why the Sahel Alliance is determined to better support the private sector in the Sahel, in cooperation with partners on the ground. To this end, we have organized an event dedicated to the Sahelian private sector during this General Assembly, in partnership with the Union of G5 Chambers of Commerce, the Union of G5 Employers and the Economic Coalition in the Sahel. We strongly support the conclusions of this event, which are annexed to this declaration.

8. Food security and climate change adaptation are closely linked in the Sahel and are crucial for the populations' resilience.

Rural development and the modernisation of agriculture, including through the promotion of agro-ecology and irrigation, are strategic factors for sustainable development that can help to ensure food security, create jobs and increase rural incomes, enhance economic productivity and limit the impacts of climate change such as desertification, land degradation and drought.

In a context where the food situation is worsening with risks of famine caused by conflict, by the effects of climate change and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Sahel Alliance reaffirms the priority it gives to these issues in the annexed declarations.

We thus recommend to:

1. **Intensify dialogue with the G5 Sahel and its Member States**, through regular contacts at the highest level, paying attention to the expressed concerns and priorities.
2. Increase efforts to **coordinate and focus on vulnerable areas** by defining intervention strategies in each priority area of the integrated territorial approach, based on local development plans, with appropriate operating methods and measurable indicators of success. In particular, it will be necessary to ensure the full involvement of local authorities and territorial administrations in this approach.
3. Support the presence, **redeployment and maintenance of the State** and public services in the territories of the G5 Sahel countries, with a focus on the delivery of essential services, strengthening the resilience of vulnerable populations - especially youth, women and disabled persons - and restoring and consolidating social cohesion and citizens' trust in their public institutions.
4. Support the efforts of the G5 Sahel governments in implementing structural reforms in favour of the rule of law and a transparent, inclusive and effective governance. The **dialogue on public policy reforms** with the G5 Sahel States should be formalised and intensified, by replicating in each G5 country the framework for dialogue that will be tested in Chad.
5. Work within the framework of the Coalition for the Sahel, toward the implementation of a **coordinated and adequate response** to the multiple Sahelian challenges, in close cooperation with the Executive Secretariat of the G5 Sahel and the Partnership for Stability and Security in the Sahel.
6. **Support the response of the G5 Sahel countries** to the health, economic and social challenges caused by the **COVID-19 pandemic**.
7. Expend increased efforts in favour of gender equality and the defence of women's rights in the G5 Sahel countries, notably through **the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda**.
8. **Provide adequate support for the development of the Sahelian private sector**, with a special focus on women and youth, agricultural value chains, business climate, access to finance, risk sharing, capacity building and innovation.