

Statement of Mr. Christophe Rauh, Director Africa at the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

2nd General Assembly of the Sahel-Alliance

Dear Madam Chairperson of the General Assembly,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends of the Sahel Alliance,

First, I would like to **thank all those who**, despite the Covid19 pandemic, have worked so hard for the Sahel Alliance during the past year - in the G5 countries, in the headquarters of the capitals and in the Sahel Alliance Secretariat in Brussels!

When I see the **high-level participation** in our General Assembly today, the message is clear: this commitment has paid off and is being acknowledged at top political level.

The Sahel Alliance is today much stronger, characterized by an **intensive exchange with our partners in the G5**, for which I would like to explicitly thank Maman Sidikou and his team and the G5 Ministers in the countries.

The **work** of the Sahel Alliance **can only be successful if all stakeholders work closely together**: teams that are scattered worldwide, the sectoral and thematic working groups, the steering committee and the General Assembly.

Corona brought an additional challenge this year. I am very happy to see that even in this particularly difficult time we managed to work together as a highly motivated group and in a very positive spirit of trust.

A **major milestone was the publication of our 3-years report** with a digital press conference in January. We will present right now the most important highlights from this report. They are quite impressive. For this review, we have - compiled our results and successes, - compared what works well under the difficult conditions of poverty and insecurity - and what may also have a pilot character and can be upscaled through our joint efforts.

The **best way to demonstrate that the Sahel Alliance is successful** is to coordinate in the best possible way, pull together in the same direction, pursue coordinated goals and whenever possible speak with one voice to our partners.

In Nouakchott, at our last GA meeting led by Minister Le Drian, we had set three specific priorities:

1. increase the effectiveness of the Sahel Alliance,
2. improve impacts in the countries,
3. intensify the political dialogue with our partners.

Therefore, in the past year, it was particularly important for us **to better connect the work which takes place at headquarters level with the work and the structures on the ground** - in the G5 countries.

With the **Integrated Territorial Approach and the process of mutual accountability and joint support for reforms**, we launched two important processes last year that are now starting to be operationalized. The Spanish Foreign Minister's visit to the region in November last year has given additional momentum to these processes.

We also worked on how to be more effective, faster and flexible in supporting G5 efforts and priority plans. More co-financing and working on new joint modalities such as a new Sahel Alliance Financing Instrument were part of this discussion.

For the coming year, my wish for the work of the Sahel Alliance is that we further consolidate and gradually expand these central processes.

We certainly also need to **consider the impact of COVID19**. The strain on the budgets of the G5 partners and of the Sahel Alliance partners, the need to do more for social security, food security, institutional capacity, youth and jobs: these major concerns will keep us busy.

Only together we can achieve concrete impacts that help to improve the difficult living conditions for the people in the Sahel, strengthen trust in statehood and contribute to peace in the long term. Last year in Nouakchott, we agreed to meet every two months at both decision-making and working level. I am pleased that we remain in such a good and close exchange with the colleagues in the G5 Secretariat.

All this is only possible thanks to the functioning of the UCA secretariat. I would like to highlight the work of Adrien Haye and the whole team. Even under the special conditions of COVID and recent staff changes, the effectiveness of their work is extremely high. But to be able to pursue this work, **we urgently need to find a solution for a solid and joint financing of our secretariat in Brussels.**

In addition, we will coordinate closely with the new Coalition for the Sahel and with P3S and agree on ways of working together. The most important point here is that we do not get lost in discussions about structures and procedures but keep on going with our concrete operational work and just do what we have to do: Implement good development programmes together with our G5 partners!

In this sense I look forward to organize and structure the work of the steering committee in the next months in order to further strengthen and expand the Sahel Alliance!