

Declaration of the Alliance Sahel on climate change

15 February 2021 – *The Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, in her capacity as President of the General Assembly of the Alliance Sahel, makes the following statement today:*

In 2020, the Sahel region was severely hit by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as by catastrophic floods. The Sahel is considered one of the world's most vulnerable regions to the consequences of climate change. The effects of climate change coupled with significant population growth and recurrent challenges linked to environmental degradation, poverty and conflict, exacerbate existing vulnerabilities.

The G5 Sahel countries rank among the 20% most vulnerable to the risks of climate change, with Chad ranking number one in the world according to the ND GAIN country index¹, followed by Niger (9th) and Mali (12th). More frequent weather extremes, the depletion of natural resources, food and water insecurity, higher incidence of diseases and increased migration and displacement are just some of the impacts of this phenomenon.

All G5 Sahel countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) include sustainable land management, agriculture, water management and increasing access to energy as priority areas. In 2021, the G5 countries will submit their updated NDCs outlining enhanced ambition. The Alliance Sahel members are committed to supporting the G5 countries in achieving these ambitions, aiming at better adaptation to climate change and mitigation, while promoting actions that deliver climate-related co-benefits. They hope that the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), to be held in Glasgow in November 2021, will bring about strong commitments and ambitious results on decarbonation.

Recognising the importance of climate as a cross-cutting issue, the Alliance Sahel officially established a climate working group in July 2019, co-chaired by the African Development Bank and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The objectives of this group are to integrate both mitigation and adaptation to climate change into all Alliance Sahel interventions and to help harmonise and coordinate partners' efforts and the G5 countries' priorities as defined in the NDCs or National Adaptation Plans.

The members of the Alliance Sahel provide strong support to the G5 Sahel countries in the implementation of ambitious climate-related initiatives:

- Many members are already contributing to the **Great Green Wall initiative in the Sahel** (land restoration, carbon sequestration, job creation). The Agence Française de Développement (AFD), in collaboration with the EU, the World Bank, IFAD, the Green Climate Fund and other members of the Alliance, will strengthen its support to this initiative, as part of a multi-donor and transnational

¹ ND GAIN Country Index, 2016 : <https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/rankings/>

approach, focusing on rural resilience and the development of agro-ecological practices.

- The African Development Bank is spearheading the “**Desert to Power**” initiative, a vast regional programme aiming to promote large-scale investments for harnessing the solar potential of 11 countries across the Sahel (including G5 Sahel countries) to deploy 10 GW of solar power by 2030 and provide access to electricity to around 250 million people across the Sahel. The AfDB also manages several climate funds, such as the **ClimDev-Africa Special Fund (CDSF)** and the **African Climate Change Fund (ACCF)**, to improve the meteorological network and climate forecast systems in the Sahel (CDSF project) and to create an institutional and policy environment conducive to the transition toward green growth in Mali (ACCF project).
- Funded by the AfDB with the support of FAO and the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), the **BIOPALT** project, implemented by UNESCO, seeks to safeguard the hydrological, biological and cultural resources of the Lake Chad basin. The project enables the five-member countries of the LCBC to strengthen their capacities for coordinated cross-border management of the basin. It includes the development of an early flood and drought warning system for climate resilience to protect the livelihoods of more than 40 million people.
- At regional level, France supports the Sahel countries through the **CREWS (Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems)** initiative, which is implementing a project on early warning systems in the region. France is also providing financial support to the **African Risk Capacity Insurance Facility** to cope with the impact of extreme climatic events. Through AFD's **Adapt'Action** mechanism, France is supporting the establishment of a national monitoring and evaluation system for the implementation of Niger's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), in partnership with UNDP and the World Bank.
- In Burkina Faso and Niger, WFP and UNICEF are working with local and international NGOs under the USAID-funded initiative **Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE)**. This initiative addresses the underlying causes of chronic vulnerability and aims to build resilience to recurring external shocks. The programme has been supporting the same vulnerable communities for several years and has benefited around 400,000 people in 60 communities in Burkina Faso and Niger. In Niger, more than 90,000 hectares of degraded land have been rehabilitated, resulting in a significant increase in production and access to food for the most vulnerable communities.
- To address conflicts related to access to natural resources, as part of the G5 Sahel Priority Investment Programme (PIP), WFP, FAO and IOM are jointly undertaking operational initiatives related to resilient transhumance.
- Within the framework of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS), the flagship project "**Empowering Women through Climate Resilient Agricultural Value Chains**" has already directly and indirectly benefited more than 30,000 female entrepreneurs in the agribusiness sector. The initiative is a

joint UN programme with the G5 Executive Secretariat and involves UNDP, FAO, UNICEF, UN Women, WFP, IOM, UNFPA and OCHA.

- The UK **Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office** (FCDO) has two climate-related programmes specifically targeting the G5 Sahel countries: a Shock Response Programme which aims to proactively direct cash transfers to poor and vulnerable populations exposed to anticipated climate shocks and an Off-Grid Energy Production Programme, through mini green grids and solar home systems in rural areas of the Sahel.