

**Sahel Alliance – CPO –****Strategic messages and recommendations towards climate integration in the Alliance Sahel**

*As international partners of the Sahel region, we recognise that climate change poses a threat to the shared objectives of the Alliance Sahel and G5 Sahel. The G5 countries rank among the most vulnerable to climate change and its impacts. Understanding and addressing climate-related risks is critical to the stability and development of the Sahel region. Low-carbon and climate-resilient development offers opportunities to reduce losses, reduce natural-resource based conflicts, to promote investment and create jobs across sectors.*

*Following the exchanges within the framework of the transversal climate group of the Alliance Sahel, we underscore the need to orient and strengthen our actions in the following areas:*

- 1. Strengthen dialogue and cooperation with G5 on climate action in the Sahel.** *At the second General Assembly, members recommended to intensify dialogue with the G5 and its member states through regular contact at the highest level, paying attention to the expressed concerns and priorities. Climate action is one such area for dialogue. In this spirit, there is a recognised need to expand engagement on this issue to relevant parts of government and regional authorities.*
  - We emphasise the importance of continuous and meaningful engagement on climate action with in-country focal points, ministers of environment and other sectors, the G5 Secretariat and Climate Commission for the Sahel Region. This will require a coordinated effort across the AS members, working groups and Secretariat.
  - We have identified needs for support on specific issues including Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) enhancement and implementation, national adaptation planning, climate risk assessment and risk finance, national systems for monitoring and evaluation of adaptation, development of climate-related project proposals and investment plans, capacity building and technical assistance at national level for adaptation and resilience and climate-conflict-migration nexus. We recommend members consider where additional support could be provided, particularly emphasising the 30 July deadline for countries to submit revised NDCs and renewed requests for Adaptation Communication submission by January 2022.
  - 2021 offers key moments for international climate dialogue at the UNFCCC Conference of Parties in Glasgow in November. The G5 focal points have expressed a desire to form a position within the Africa Group of Negotiators with respect to the negotiations. We recommend members strive to provide the space for dialogue among G5 countries and partners via preparatory meetings, at Africa Climate Week and at COP26, as well as other important events that include involvement of AS members on issues of climate and resilience, e.g. the UN Food Systems Summit.
  - To strengthen dialogue on climate-related challenges facing Sahel region, we recommend that climate be a central theme in upcoming events, for example the proposed Sahel Business Forum, food security forum, G5 Leaders' Summits and other events that may take place.
  - It is important to strengthen the policy environment for climate mainstream in all development actions by climate change by including climate change as a cross-cutting issue in policy development and planning tools at both national and regional levels.
  
- 2. Gain more insight into the climate relevant portfolio of the AS members' initiatives.** *There is a need for clearer overview of climate-related activities across the AS. This is in order to identify gaps and opportunities for partnership and to communicate within the AS, with the G5 and externally on support and results. **Last year**, significant progress was made with the inclusion of climate markers in the portfolio review, but approximately 80% of projects listed did not report on climate change in 2020.*
  - We underscore the importance of AS members to provide information reporting on climate action to the Secretariat. This will substantially enhance the ability to identify geographical or sectoral gaps for action, opportunities for partnership between members and issues raised in dialogue with the G5.

- We favour an analysis comparing information on climate-relevant initiatives and the sectoral mitigation and adaptation commitments of existing and enhanced NDCs of G5 countries. In addition to the submission of climate-related activities in the portfolio review, we also request members to clarify the planning and allocation cycles of their development cooperation and support. This will allow us to seize opportunities for alignment with the Paris Agreement, ensuring accountability and additionality, and assessing the implementation of countries' climate commitments in a timely and proactive manner.
- We encourage members of the working groups to share tools, best practices and strategies for reducing vulnerabilities to climate change, increasing resilience or mitigating emissions and enhancing synergies for action. In particular, the Energy, Agriculture and Food Security, Private Sector Development and Decentralisation working groups would have examples and experience to offer. With best practices and examples in hand, all AS members and the Secretariat will be well equipped to communicate progress and results.

**3. Build on existing support for building capacity within G5.** *There is an identified need to increase the capacities of key stakeholders and sectors to advance climate action in order to help scaling capacities up and out to other public and private actors at local, national and regional levels.*

- We recommend a stronger focus on institutional capacity building for climate risk management, including monitoring and evaluation systems based on what AS members know works well from experience across working groups.
- We suggest AS members consider support for knowledge sharing, regional peer learning and training for accessing climate finance across sectors, mainstreaming climate change into development, climate risk management and finance, for UNFCCC negotiators and for parliamentarians on creating enabling legislative environment for climate action.
- We suggest AS members to capitalise on lessons learnt within development interventions and the existing body of knowledge built on how best to support climate adaptation for local communities.

Conclusion:

*The transversal working group on climate integration enjoys a large, diverse and dynamic membership, representative of the AS members, observers and levels of organisation in country and headquarters. The critical importance of climate risk management, adaptation and mitigation to the achievement of the Alliance Sahel objectives are clear and enshrined in the Declaration on Climate Change adopted at the second General Assembly. AS members already provide strong support on implementation of ambitious and effective climate action, but there is room for improvement in coordination, the level and coverage of support and the urgency to meet the needs identified by the working group and G5 partners.*

*The year 2021 is pivotal for climate action and for the development and stability of the G5 Sahel. As countries face the significant effects of COVID-19, governance challenges, conflict, food insecurity and weather extremes, the international community will meet to agree what must be done to address climate change. It is essential that we step up our own efforts to contribute to the solutions through an integrated approach to climate action.*