

Remarks by Yero BALDEH, Director, Transition States Coordination Office, African Development Bank Group, at the 3rd Sahel Alliance General Assembly, 4th April 2022

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,
All protocols observed.

1. I would first like to begin by conveying the apologies of Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank Group, who unfortunately cannot personally take part in these important exchanges due to prior work commitments.
2. He reiterates his commitment to the Sahel Alliance and as he always says: ***'the economic growth, resilience and sustainability of lives and livelihoods in the Sahel is an utmost priority for the African Development Bank'***.
3. The African Development Bank supports the ongoing collaboration and sees the need to better bundle our efforts in this regard, which includes the need to streamline the work of the different platforms of the G5 Sahel, and also strengthen the institutional capacity of the G5 Sahel Secretariat for more effective and lasting results.
4. This is crucial for a successful execution of the Integrated Territorial Approach, the formulation of the new G5 Sahel Development and Security Strategy, and the eventual implementation of the ensuing Priority Investment Programme of the region.
5. As a founding member of the Sahel Alliance, the African Development Bank believes that our collective efforts across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus to address the challenges of the region cannot be overemphasized.
6. The African Development Bank is doing its part with more than USD3 billion invested in the G5 Sahel. These resources contribute to six core priorities of the Sahel including agriculture, climate change, gender equality, youth employment, energy, and governance.
7. Specifically, this includes scaling up the Desert to Power initiative, the Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa (AFAWA), Climate Change Adaptation programs, supporting youth entrepreneurship, and championing the Great Green Wall initiative.

8. It also includes looking for innovative financial instruments that would help reduce the fiscal pressures that G5 Sahel countries suffer due to rising security expenditure and the trade-off effects it has on development financing, and indeed the worsening debt sustainability situation of these countries, compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the worsening food crisis due to the war in Ukraine.
9. As we heard today from earlier speakers, the challenges of the G5 Sahel are multidimensional, interlinked, complex and always evolving BUT so too are our analyses, tools and responses.
10. This gives us hope, energy and optimism. Peace, stability and prosperity in the G5 Sahel is possible when we each roll up our sleeves, innovate, collaborate and have the interests of all Sahelian people in mind, with no-one left behind.
11. It will also require us investing more on Prevention to avoid the expansion of the effects of the G5 Sahel to other Sahelian countries and the coastal areas. We have to work together towards addressing the root causes of fragility and conflict and also ensure that existing robust Early Warning Systems are actually informing response planning and political decisions.
12. In line with the African Development Bank's newly approved Strategy for Addressing Fragility and Building Resilience in Africa (2022 -2026), it is also our believe that creating an enabling business environment and catalyzing private sector investments in the G5 Sahel is essential towards promoting a paradigm shift towards wealth creation in local communities.
13. In a similar vein, we also believe in strengthening our engagement with Civil Society Organisations in the design and implementation of our operations at national and local levels, especially in vulnerable communities, for enhanced development impact on local populations.
14. In conclusion, allow me to reaffirm that the African Development Bank will continue to actively support the G5 Sahel governments and people, in close collaboration with the Executive Secretariat of the G5 Sahel and all our partners across the HDP nexus, including the African Union, Regional Economic Communities, civil society, and the private sector.

Thank you for your attention.
