

**Acting AA Diana Putman Remarks Sahel Alliance General Assembly**  
**April 4, 2022**  
**(3 minutes - 450 words)**

Thank you. It is a true pleasure to be here at the third annual General Assembly of the Sahel Alliance. First, I would like to commend Honorable Minister Jose Manuel Albares Bueno for his tireless work in leading the Sahel Alliance. I would also like to recognize the Alliance Steering Committee Chair, Christoph Rauh, and the Sahel Alliance Coordination Unit for all of their efforts. Thank you for bringing us together to discuss the priorities and needs of the Sahel region.

And finally, I'd like to offer a sincere thank you to the Government of Spain for hosting us today.

I am honored and delighted to join you today as a full member of the Sahel Alliance. Our full membership follows four years as observers, and we are grateful to the Sahel Alliance for approving our new status.

The United States embraces our full membership in the Sahel Alliance. We know that it will offer excellent opportunities to partner in new ways with donors, private sector, and host governments. It will allow the United States to engage more deeply, and presents the potential to help grow development and reform efforts in the Sahel.

Our full member status reflects the Biden Administration's commitment to increasing collaboration and engagement with Africa. Working with the Alliance, other U.S. Government agencies, host governments, and with like-minded donors, we will leverage existing partnerships to collectively address the growing insecurity in West Africa and to achieve tangible results.

During fiscal year 2020, the United States provided more than \$598 million in development and humanitarian assistance to programs in the G5 countries of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.

USAID activities cover a number of sectors including: health, agriculture, environment, water and sanitation as well as private sector investment, education, democracy, human rights, and governance. All of these activities contribute to five broad goals for the U.S. engagement in the Sahel.

The first of these goals is to increase the ability of people and communities to prepare for and bounce back from hardship - be it a natural disaster, armed conflict, climate change, or a failed harvest. This is what we refer to as **resilience**.

The second is to **prevent and counter violent extremism**. We promote security by helping communities to peacefully resolve local grievances, improve accountable governance, and offer economic opportunities to youth vulnerable to extremist recruitment.

The third overarching goal is to provide life-saving **humanitarian assistance** to people affected by conflict, floods, drought, and other types of disasters.

The fourth is to help the people of the Sahel adapt to rapid **climate change events and forces** that contribute to desertification and other natural phenomena such as more frequent and intense floods or droughts.

The last, and most recent, goal is to help people and countries in the region to fight the ongoing **Covid-19 pandemic**, and to mitigate its effects on daily life.

We know that strong partnerships with all the countries of the G5 Sahel and close cooperation with the many donors and partners present here today are key to success in all of the work we do in the Sahel.

It is a true honor to join you as a full member of the Sahel Alliance to celebrate the achievements of the Alliance over the past year, and to be a part of a rich dialogue with the G5 Sahel.

Thank you. I look forward to the engaging, thought provoking, and fruitful discussions with the G5 Sahel representatives here today.