

Eingangsstatement Christoph Rauh

9. CPO der Sahel-Allianz

Dear Fellow Members of the Sahel Alliance,
Dear Partners and Friends of the G5 countries,

I warmly welcome you to our 9th steering committee. Please, allow me first to share with you how glad I am to see all of you in person again.

My special welcome goes to **Mr. Eric Tiaré**, G5 Sahel Executive Secretary – we are glad you are here with us today. I also warmly welcome **Mrs. Carmen Magariños Casal** as the representative of the Presidency of the Sahel Alliance General Assembly. We are happy to also have with us today **Maman Sidikou**, High Representative of the African Union for Mali and the Sahel and **Djimé Adoum**, High Representative of the Coalition for the Sahel – welcome!

I am also very pleased to welcome one of our **newest members, Canada** – to their first steering committee meeting. It is great to see that our Alliance keeps growing and that we now bridge the Atlantic in a broader sense to strengthen the Sahel region.

Dear members and partners, while I am pleased to welcome you all here, **my thoughts are with the people in the Sahel**. Considering the developments which have transpired over the course of the last months and weeks I am deeply worried. My thoughts are with those **affected by the latest attacks in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger**, in which so many people lost their lives or had to flee violence and leave their homes.

Those **attacks remind us**, that we are facing **transboundary challenges** in the Sahel region. Allow me therefore to express my **regret regarding the implications of Mali's decision** to suspend its participation in our **partner organization** the **G5 Sahel**. It is the organization that provides us with an **overarching regional point of view** among a multitude of national perspectives. It is the organization that serves as **our direct partner** and most importantly it is the very organization that our mandate is built upon. We **need political dialogue** to bridge the differences.

Secondly, I am worried about **Russia's invasion of Ukraine** that is also **highly impacting the Sahel**. While the **war is geographically far** from the Sahel, **its implications on food security** in the region loom large: Six West African countries import over 30% of their wheat from Russia and Ukraine. **Chad** has already officially **declared a state of food emergency**. Overall, the war could result in **up to 10 million more** people in the Sahel **becoming food insecure**. In light of these rising numbers, not only in the Sahel, Germany has, together with the World Bank and G7, initiated a **global alliance for food security** within its **G7 presidency**. This is an important sign and very timely step to address this exacerbating issue at a global level. Yet, the war in Ukraine only acts as a **compound effect** to a crisis in **the Sahel** which had already **seen food insecurity in the region rise** at an alarming rate to over the last years to **more than 27 million people affected**. It is therefore paramount that we tackle this issue adequately and forcefully. I hope our **panel discussion** today can be a steppingstone for our understanding of **how we can contribute to the containment** of this aggravating humanitarian catastrophe. I am especially **grateful to have Mr. Aboubacar Djimraou from the 3N Initiative (*Les Nigériens Nourissent les Nigériens*)** with his in-depth **regional knowledge** as a participant in this discussion.

Despite the importance of these surging crises, we cannot forget about the already existing challenges and the **persisting instability** in the region. Despite our many efforts we have yet to **turn the tide**; the overall fragility in the region is still increasing rather than decreasing. To help us in our understanding we will shine a **spotlight on the ATI implementation in a crisis context**.

These developments, which I have outlined briefly, set the scene for us today. We need to engage these topics head on. I look forward to **facilitating our exchanges** today and I hope that this CPO will set us on the right path towards **advancing and intensifying our cooperation** and improving the lives of people in the Sahel.

Now, I have the honor to **give the floor to Ambassador Eric Tiaré**.