

Sahel Alliance, General Assembly

Nouakchott, 10 juli 2023

I would like to thank His Excellencies President Ghazouani for welcoming us in Mauritania and Minister Albares for Spain's leadership over the last years as President of the General Assembly of the Sahel Alliance.

I would also like to thank, in particular, the representatives of the Sahel countries present today. Your participation and your commitment are key to address the joint challenges we're facing.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The situation in the Sahel is deeply worrying. The growing insecurity in many parts of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger has severe consequences for the population. Attacks by jihadist and other armed groups have killed thousands of people. Almost half of all terrorism deaths globally last year occurred in the Sahel.

But violence can also kill and cause harm indirectly: Instability and insecurity make it increasingly difficult for humanitarian actors and development organisations to serve the people who need help the most. These circumstances also affect the work of the G5 Sahel and the Sahel Alliance.

In light of these challenges, three elements are key:

First, we need an integrated approach that takes into account the security, humanitarian, and development aspects. The new strategy for Development and Security of the G5 Sahel is therefore an important development.

Second, the needs of the local population should guide our efforts. All initiatives should be driven by local needs. This requires an open dialogue about our shared priorities and our common objectives. We welcome, therefore, the exchange between the G5 and the Sahel Alliance on the side-lines of this meeting to align our efforts. In this respect, we would also like to highlight that the implementation of the recommendations of the independent review of the Sahel Alliance should be a priority, which stressed the need for coordination and more strategic discussions.

Third, a long-term approach is necessary to address the multiple challenges the Sahel countries are facing. In particular, this means putting youth at the centre of our development policies, as they are the future. Investments in youth participation and youth employment, but also in access to education and health, including reproductive health, should be a priority. This should include, in particular, efforts to improve the opportunities for young women and girls.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Netherlands stands ready to work with the G5 Sahel, the Sahel Alliance and its partners to achieve those objectives. Our commitment to support the people of the Sahel will remain strong and our efforts solid.

We wish the incoming German presidency of the Sahel Alliance all the best in guiding our joint efforts, and we look forward to continuing the strong collaboration for the future of the Sahel.

Thank you.