

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Denmark would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the government of Mauretania for hosting the General Assembly. We would also like to extend our appreciation to Spain for the past three years of valuable presidency of the General Assembly. Also, we warmly congratulate Germany for taking over the presidency, and wish you much success.

The situation in the Sahel region is increasingly worrying. We are witnessing a devastating humanitarian crisis where civilians are paying a heavy price for the insecurity, political instability, and impact of climate change. Developments that affects the entire region – and beyond. In this regard, the changing political developments in Mali and in Burkina Faso have implied that we along other international partners have restructured our engagement. Yet, it is important that the international community remain engaged in the Sahel region and continue our support to the populations in need.

The climate crisis is one of the biggest threats to international peace and security. Its interconnected consequences jeopardise livelihoods and adversely affect national, regional, and global stability. And it amplifies existing threats to development. According to the UN, approximately 40% of all internal conflicts is due to fighting over scarce natural resources.

In the Sahel region, pressure on natural resources and extreme weather events make it difficult for people to sustain their livelihoods.

In this respect, there is no doubt that the need for helping the world's most vulnerable countries with climate adaptation will increase. An integrated approach to the climate-security-development nexus is therefore key. We do indeed welcome this year's General Assembly theme on “**Security, Climate and Development**”.

Climate change is a particular burden and matter of concern for the younger generations. We strongly support the strategic priority of accelerating the implementation of initiatives in favour of increasing opportunities for youth in the Sahel.

Meaningful participation of youth is necessary to successfully counter the challenges we face today. We are currently working on strengthening our climate engagement with our youth sounding boards. Our youth sounding boards provide valuable input to Danish development policies. Through our engagement in the Sahel Alliance, we look forward to sharing our lessons learned and experiences on meaningful participation of youth, including within the climate change agenda. A focus on youth is key to longterm stabilisation of the Sahel – inclusion and voice remains key pillars in sustainable pathways for peace.

We strongly support the General Assembly's strengthened commitment to efforts on **gender equality and gender mainstreaming**. Women are

disproportionately affected by climate-induced conflicts. It is key to ensure their full, equal and meaningful participation in all stages towards building resilience and peace.

The Sahel Alliance is an important coordination platform of international development efforts in the Sahel. It is crucial to continuously strengthen the effectiveness of the Sahel Alliance, including through implementation of the recommendations of the independent review.

Denmark appreciates the discussions already taking place on **ensuring local ownership and optimising the coordination of efforts** in the Sahel. We are looking forward to the Issoufou Panel's report and recommendations and hope that its recommendations will help inform further effective coordination efforts in the region going forward.

Let me conclude by underlining that the Sahel region remains a key priority for Denmark. We will continue our efforts to support the people of the Sahel in close collaboration with our partners.

Thank you