

Press Release

Alliance Sahel: at their 4th General Assembly, members reaffirm their partnership with the G5 Sahel

Nouakchott, July 10, 2023 – Over 120 representatives of the Sahel Alliance and its Sahelian partners met in Nouakchott on July 10, 2023, for the Alliance's 4th General Assembly. The meeting was attended by His Excellency Mohamed Cheikh El Ghazouani, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. In a complex environment marked by a deterioration of the security and humanitarian context, in particular food insecurity in several regions of the Sahel, the members reaffirmed their support for regional integration and solidarity. In response to the priorities of the Sahelian countries, they proposed to increase their commitment to the people of the Sahel for three strategic priorities. At the end of the General Assembly, Spain handed over the presidency of the Sahel Alliance to Germany.

Despite the region's many potentials, the Sahel continues to face multiple crises. The increase and diversity of insecurity factors, the political transitions underway in some countries, high levels of food insecurity, the growing impact of climate change-related shocks and the war of aggression against the Ukraine are all weighing on development gains. In some regions, they lead to major population movements, further weakening social cohesion and living conditions.

In his opening speech, President Ghazouani reminded the audience that *“Today, there is no doubt that the Sahel as a whole, and particularly the G5 countries, is facing socio-economic and ecological security crises beyond measure with its own resilience capacities alone. These crises, exacerbated by a particularly difficult international situation, feed and amplify each other, in a sort of dramatic vicious circle. And we can only hope to break this cycle by synergizing efforts, adopting a holistic approach and implementing a strong collective response, sustainably supported by active solidarity on the part of the international community.”*

In this context, Alliance members remain committed, with an overall increase in their interventions in the Alliance's focus sectors (15% rise for active projects between 2021 and 2022, for a total amount of 26.5 billion euros).

This 4th General Assembly was chaired by the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, Jose Manuel Albares. In his opening speech, Minister Albares stressed that *“Spain believes that the link between security, development and climate change is crucial”*.

A revised and reaffirmed partnership

Convinced that regional integration and solidarity are essential to meeting the region's challenges, the members of the Sahel Alliance reiterated their support to the G5 Sahel. A revised version of the partnership protocol linking the two initiatives was signed by the G5 Sahel Executive Secretary and the Head of the Sahel Alliance Coordination Unit on July 10. Alliance members have committed to strengthening regional dialogue on public policy priorities and reforms to support the development trajectories of G5 Sahel countries, in line with the priorities of the new G5 Sahel Development and Security Strategy.

To this end, Alliance members have proposed to increase their collective commitment to three strategic priorities: (i) creating opportunities through employment, education and skills development, (ii) resilience to shocks, in particular through support for national crisis prevention and response mechanisms, (iii) regional development and local access to essential services, with particular attention to fragile areas.

At the conclusion of the Assembly, the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, Jose Manuel Albares, and the German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Svenja Schulze, formally handed over the presidency of the Sahel Alliance General Assembly from Spain to Germany.

Ms Svenja Schulze recalled in her intervention *that “The Sahel Alliance brings together the region’s most important civilian supporters. Together we can achieve sustainable and tangible improvements that will make the situation for people in the Sahel better. With my presidency I would like to show the people of the Sahel region that we are there for them and that our support makes a difference. I am focused on getting more jobs and training opportunities, better basic services and stronger social protection networks in the Sahel.”*

The members of the Sahel Alliance encourage all international partners to increase their financial, technical and political support. There will be no peace and stability in the Sahel without a profound and qualitative change in the living conditions of the Sahelian people.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF ALLIANCE SAHEL MEMBERS AT THE 4th GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

- 1. Support regional integration and solidarity to meet the challenges faced by the region.**
- 2. Strengthen and coordinate our support to meet the urgent needs of the Sahelian populations on the basis of clearly defined reciprocal commitments.**
- 3. Increase our collective commitment and impact on three strategic priorities (i) creating opportunities through employment, education and skills development, (ii) resilience to shocks (iii) territorial development and access to basic services.**
- 4. Strengthen the effectiveness of the Sahel Alliance as a platform for coordination and dialogue by implementing the recommendations of the independent review of the Sahel Alliance.**
- 5. Pursue our efforts to ensure that populations living in fragile peripheral areas particularly exposed to the spread of violent extremism have access to essential services and economic and employment opportunities.**

Focus on the 4th General Assembly of the Sahel Alliance

Federating the action of 27 bilateral and multilateral development partners (18 full members and 9 observers), the Sahel Alliance is today the main framework for enhanced coordination of development cooperation initiatives in the Sahel. (alliance-sahel.org)

The 4th General Assembly of the Sahel Alliance, chaired by Mr. José Manuel Albares Bueno, Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, was held in Nouakchott on July 10, 2023, with high-level participation from its members and partners.

See the declaration of the 4th General Assembly of the Alliance: alliance-sahel.org

Information and contact:

- Aude Rossignol, Communications Officer, Sahel Alliance Coordination Unit,
aude.rossignol@giz.de