

**Reden von Bundesentwicklungsministerin Svenja Schulze bei der
Generalversammlung der Sahel-Allianz am 10. Juli 2023 in Nouakchott,
Mauretanien**

**Speeches by German Development Minister Svenja Schulze at the Sahel
Alliance's General Assembly in Nouakchott, Mauritania on July 10, 2023**

Es gilt das gesprochene Wort!

The spoken word applies!

1. Opening Remarks:

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Representatives of Sahel Alliance members and observer organizations,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is very important to me to be here today.

Let me start off by thanking the President of the Mauritanian Republic for joining this session of the Sahel Alliance's General Assembly. Germany greatly welcomes Mauretania's engagement and its endeavours to redynamize the G5 Sahel.

My sincere thanks go to Spain for heading the political body of the Sahel Alliance for three years now.

The Sahel has great potential: a young population, abundant natural resources, untapped possibilities for increased agricultural production and huge renewable energy potential.

At the same time, the region is facing major challenges. Among them are the increasing impacts of climate change, rising fragility and terrorism, and, as a consequence, dramatically growing food insecurity and displacement.

Germany has been engaged in the Sahel for over sixty years. And the region remains high on our political agenda. Germany is committed to supporting the region's development and its citizens' wish for a peaceful and prosperous

future. Therefore, I want to continue working closely with civil society, governments and other actors.

Six years after the foundation of the Sahel Alliance Germany, as one of its members, is more convinced than ever that a coordinated approach is crucial to effectively supporting the development priorities of Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauretania, Niger and Chad. Because the challenges they face are multifaceted, cross-border and interrelated.

Germany is ready and willing to take on further responsibility in the Sahel Alliance. That is why I would be delighted to take over the presidency of the General Assembly.

I firmly believe that the Sahel Alliance is the right instrument to bring together the individual contributions of all the partners involved and create the synergies we need. Together we can achieve more!

The development priorities of the Sahel countries should be the basis for coordinated, international engagement. Against this background, I look forward to the forthcoming exchange with the G5 on their priorities for the coming years.

I want to listen to you and learn from you. I believe that you, as representatives of the region, know best how the multiple crises of the Sahel can be addressed. We – your international partners – want to support you in this endeavour.

Let us pool resources, join hands and work together even more closely – for the benefit of the people of the Sahel.

Thank you.

2. Orientations of the incoming Presidency of the General Assembly on the priorities of the Sahel Alliance:

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to use this opportunity to thank our Spanish colleagues, especially Minister José Manuel Albares as the current President of the Sahel Alliance General Assembly, for all their efforts and for the achievements realised under the Spanish presidency. The priorities defined under the Spanish presidency will remain important for the continued work of the Alliance.

The Sahel Alliance sees the great potential of the Sahel region. At the same time, we see that the challenges are increasing, for example the impact of climate change, as discussed in the previous session.

Based on the important work done under the Spanish presidency, we as members of the Alliance should therefore step up our efforts.

With this in mind, I would like to pursue three goals together with all partners involved during the German presidency of the General Assembly:

Firstly, I want the Alliance to “Deliver better”: We need to achieve noticeable improvements in the lives of the people in the Sahel. And that has to happen fast.

Secondly, I want Alliance members to “Coordinate stronger”: In light of the challenges ahead, we need to further improve coordination among donors and with our partners to increase our efficiency.

Thirdly, I want us to “Communicate jointly”: Shared messages and a joint political dialogue between the Sahel Alliance and its partners will improve collaboration further and are key to our engagement’s visibility.

In pursuing these goals, I would like to especially focus on three areas:

The first is jobs, training and education. Creating prospects, especially for young people, is crucial in generating income and addressing the root causes of radicalization and instability.

The second priority is strengthening the resilience of people and societies, in particular through social protection and food security. This is especially urgent given the increasing impact of climate change related shocks.

Thirdly, a focus will be on strengthening local authorities so that they can improve people's access to basic services, such as water, health and education.

In all three areas, we focus on strengthening women and youth. Because they are the ones who suffer most in times of conflict and need – and the ones who contribute substantially to the solution in each case.

I am convinced that, while the people of the Sahel need immediate support to survive, we have to increase efforts to promote a long-term transformation and sustainable development in the region.

This can only be achieved in close coordination with the G5. I thank the G5 for presenting clear objectives in this regard to us today!

As the new President, I am committed to further deepening the partnership between the Sahel Alliance and its G5 partners and to aligning the Alliance's activities with their priorities. The new *Program of Investment* and the new *Strategy for Development and Security* of the G5 are very helpful for the Alliance in understanding the G5's priorities and working towards them. At the Alliance's meeting with the G5 tomorrow, the way forward will be discussed more in depth.

Looking ahead to the future, I would like to invite all Sahel Alliance members, together with the World Bank, to engage in our joint consultation process in the coming weeks and months to effectively support the G5 priorities.

I hope that we can soon develop a joint work program to guide our activities in the next few months. Thank you for your continued support.

We are united in our wish for a peaceful and prosperous Sahel!

3. Closing Remarks

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you very much, Minister Albares, for your words. I am delighted to take over the presidency of the General Assembly of the Sahel Alliance.

I would like to thank all participants of this meeting for your valuable inputs.

To me, the 4th General Assembly has been an important step towards stronger coordination and in mapping out clear priorities for the upcoming year.

Let us use this momentum to increase our efforts in the coming months.

I would like to invite all partners of the Sahel Alliance to jointly define and agree on the priorities of this Presidency in line with the work areas I outlined earlier.

An open and honest dialogue with our political partners is the basis for fostering transformation. As president of the General Assembly, I will therefore work hard to intensify the exchange with our partners.

First and foremost with the G5. Today's session is a good starting point for this. I also look forward to staying in close touch with the representatives of the G5 and with your countries in international fora. And I look forward to working to put the challenges, interests and concerns of the Sahel region high on the international agenda.

Last but not least, I am looking forward to visiting the region more frequently. As President of the Sahel Alliance I would like to listen and learn in order to contribute to a well-coordinated and effective engagement of the Alliance in the region. Because ultimately that is the purpose of the Alliance: to effectively serve the people of the Sahel.

I therefore aim to fulfil my new mandate in the spirit of partnership. I thank you for your trust and look forward to our continued work together.