

UN Support Plan for the Sahel working together for a prosperous and peaceful sahel







The 10 UN Support Plan for the Sahel Countries

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The overarching goal of the UN Support Plan for the Sahel is to scale up efforts to accelerate shared prosperity and lasting peace in the Sahel countries and the region at-large by implementing priorities to achieve the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the African Union Agenda 2063



INTRODUCTION

he Sahel¹, the vast semi-arid region of Africa separating the Sahara Desert to the north and tropical savannas to the south, is as much a land of opportunities as it is of challenges. It is blessed with abundant human, cultural and natural resources, offering tremendous potential for rapid growth. Yet there are deeprooted challenges—environmental, political and security—that may affect the prosperity and peace of the Sahel.

The overarching goal of the UN Support Plan for the Sahel, targeting 10 countries namely Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, The Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal, is to scale up efforts to accelerate shared prosperity and lasting peace in the region. The Support Plan, covering the period 2018-2030, will help implement identified priorities to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063.

The Support Plan is not a new strategy; rather it is an instrument to foster coherence and coordination for greater efficiency and results delivery under the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) framework, which is at the centre of the international response in the Sahel and is in accordance with Security Council Resolution 2391 (2017)1.

It also aims at mobilizing public resources and triggering private investments in the 10 countries in support of ongoing efforts and initiatives by governments, international and regional organizations, and other partners.

The Support Plan therefore aims to improve coordination and strengthen collaboration with all partners in the region, including national and regional institutions, bilateral and multilateral organizations, the private sector and civil society organizations, to work towards operationalizing and implementing the Security Council resolutions on the Sahel.

The Support Plan is built around the following six priority areas:

- i. Cross-border cooperation
- ii. Prevention and sustaining peace
- iii. Inclusive growth
- iv. Climate action
- v. Renewable energy
- vi. Women and youth empowerment

Women, youth and job creation will cut across all priority areas and interventions, aiming at strengthening governance, improving security and building resilience, as well as promoting a more integrated approach to address the humanitarian-security-development nexus as a strategy to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Support Plan focuses on cross-border and regional cooperation to promote complementarity and convergence among the 10 countries, as well as synergies of activities, partnerships and innovations, and to mobilize expertise and financial resources.

^{1.} The Sahel, semiarid region of Africa extending from Senegal eastward to The Sudan – or from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea. However, based on common development challenges, the UNISS Sahel Plan is only limited to 10 countries (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, The Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Chad).



THE SAHEL: A LAND OF OPPORTUNITIES

oo frequently, narratives describing the Sahel inadvertently focus on challenges such as violence and conflict, extremism and terrorism, shocks and vulnerabilities, often ignoring the region's abundant opportunities and enormous potential, given its natural, demographic and cultural assets.

The macroeconomic conditions in the Sahel (economic growth, fiscal balance, debt sustainability, and inflation) have been steadier and stronger than the continental average over the past decade. Moreover, seven of the ten Sahelian countries recorded improvement overall in the Mo Ibrahim Governance Index between 2012 and 2016 while six countries improved their ratings in the Human Development Index (in terms of improvement in access to health, education and decent incomes) between 2007 and 2016.

A stable Sahel, with a population of over 300 million and a rising urbanization trend, offers immense opportunities for the global market.

The region is also blessed with cultural and physical heritage that endears it to the rest of the world, such as the Cameroonian and the Futah Jallon mountains, the Mali Empire, the Sokoto Caliphate and the Timbuktu historical library.

In addition to its rich grasslands, the Sahel sits atop of some of the largest aquifers on the continent as well as surface water such as Lake Chad, and rivers in Niger, Gambia and Senegal, which are major sources of livelihoods and international cooperation. The costal and maritime zones of the Sahel are among the richest fishing grounds in the world.

In terms of natural resources, the Sahel is one of the richest regions in the world and is abundant with oil, natural gas, gold, phosphates, diamonds, copper, iron ore, bauxite, biological diversity and precious woods, among many other assets. These natural endowments offer immense value for economic diversification, value-chain development and livelihoods.

The Sahel is also endowed with more potential for renewable energy such as solar and wind than other regions of the world. Its solar energy potential translates to about 13.9 billion

kWh/year compared to the world's electricity consumption of 20 million kWh/year, according to 2016 data². Yet, only about 31 percent of the population in the Sahel had access to electricity in 2014.

The Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiatives, including the Trans-Saharan Highway, regional fiber optic, Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline and continental trade corridors, offer opportunities for businesses and growth that can transform the region.

A LAND OF **OPPORTUNITIES**



POPULATION & URBANIZATION

A stable Sahel, with a population of over 300 million, and a rising trend of urbanization offers immense opportunities for the global market



SOCIO-CULTURAL COHESION

Interaction between Arabic, Islamic, Nomadic, Indigenous, Traditional cultures could serve unifying force for partnership and driver for progress and trade



YOUTH

The Sahel is the most youthful region of the world with 64,5% of youth aged less than 25 years. Investments in education and vocational training could yield a demographic dividend



MACROECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The macroeconomic conditions in the Sahel (economic growth, fiscal balance, debt sustainability and inflation) have been steadier and stronger than the continental average over the past decade.



ENERGY

The Sahel is endowed with great potential for renewable energy such as solar & wind. Its solar energy potential translates to about 13.9 billion kWh/year compared to the world all electricity consumption of 20 million kWh/year in 2016



NATURAL RESSOURCES

One of the richest region of the world in terms of its abundant natural resources such as oil, natural gas, gold, phosphates, diamonds, copper, iron ore, bauxite, biological diversity and precious woods, among many other assets



INFRASTRUCTURE

The presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative including the Trans Saharan Highway, regional fiber optic, Trans Saharan Gas Pipeline and continental trade corridors offer opportunities for business and growth that will transform the region



CULTURE & TOURISM

The Sahel is blessed with cultural and physical heritage that endear the region to the rest of the world, e.g., the Cameroonian and the Futah Jallon mountains, the Mali empire, the Sokoto Caliphate and the Timbuktu historical library



WATER

In addition to its rich grasslands, the Sahel sits atop of some of the largest aquifers on the continent as well as surface water which are major sources of livelihoods and international cooperation. The costal and maritime zone of the Sahel are among the richest fishing grounds in the world

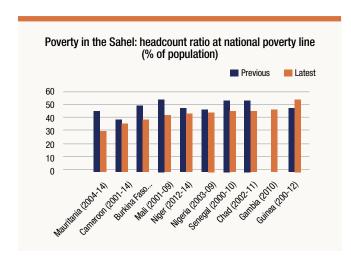
Risks to a Prosperous and Peaceful Sahel

For years, the improvements and growth witnessed in the Sahel have been overshadowed by complex and multi-dimensional challenges. These are characterized by mutually reinforcing factors of vulnerability, instability and insecurity. These risks are intensified by political and governance crises, unequal distribution of wealth and lack of access to resources, opportunities and basic services. The demographic bulge, combined with climate change, could worsen a phenomenon of violence and conflict, and lead to displacement and migration.

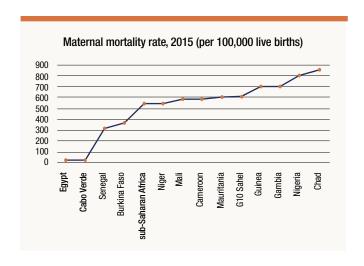
The security situation is complex, even as vulnerability to climate change is intense. Multiple factors have created a breeding ground for violent extremism, terrorism and criminality in the Sahel and beyond. These factors include:

- endemic poverty, inequality (including gender inequality), deep exclusions and human rights abuses;
- limited access to basic services like health, education, water and energy;
- high rate of youth unemployment;
- governance challenges and a lack of capacity of public service.

Without a dedicated, integrated, and coherent global approach to addressing trans-boundary and regional level needs in the Sahel, none of the three agendas (2030 Sustainable



Development, 2063 African Union Vision and Sustaining Peace) can be fully achieved. The recalibrated UNISS, which is 94 percent aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals, offers opportunities for a more comprehensive, coherent and coordinated approach to sustainable development and sustaining peace.



Emerging Lessons

Key lessons from the UNISS implementation since 2013 highlight the need to scale up the absorptive capacity of national and regional institutions to deliver on their mandates. The need to strengthen coherence, coordination and partnership for the Sahel, and to better address the humanitarian-development nexus and its linkages to peace, while aligning strategies, programmes and funding, was also acknowledged.

Other key lessons include the need to diversify sources of development assistance (currently, just four donors account for 57 percent of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the region) in order to trigger investment, attract private sector engagement and to leverage the vast opportunities in the Sahel, as well as promote participatory monitoring and impact assessment.

The UN Support Plan for the Sahel offers avenues for innovation, efficiency and partnerships for greater coherent, coordinated and integrated collective action. It is time to turn challenges into opportunities.

RISKS TO A **Prosperous and Peaceful Sahel**



Radicalization, violent extremism and terrorist

attacks are truncating development gains "blighting the lives and futures of too many children and youth in the region"



High poverty, limited access to social services and weak **public-sector performance**

impede progress in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development and foster exclusion



Gender based violence and inequalities

continue to hinder empowerment of women and girls, and deprive the Sahel of the potential contributions of more than half its population



Strengthened institutional

capacity, enforcement of the

rule of law and improved

regulatory quality are key to

implementing the SDGs

and achieving peaceful and

inclusive societies

Climate change is driving food

insecurity, malnutrition, internal migration and conflicts in the Sahel



19 different regional **strategies** for the Sahel have impeded coordination, create overlaps and duplications, as well as weaken coherence and impact



A high energy deficit

exists amidst a vast energy potential, creating an energy paradox in the Sahel

EMERGING LESSONS FROM UNISS IMPLEMENTATION

(2013 - present)







Ensuring coherence, coordination and strengthened partnership for the Sahel





Promoting the humanitarian-development nexus and its linkages to peace



Triggering investment and private sector engagement in the region



Diversifying sources of development assistance – based on predictable funding and innovation solutions – for the Sahel





THE PRIORITY AREAS

Objective

To identify strategic priority areas with strong multipliers that harness the potentialities of the region and address the critical challenges facing the Sahel. Under each priority areas, transformative interventions will be developed to trigger funding and investments, both from public and private sources.

Overview

he outcome of consultations with stakeholders, review of national and regional development plans and strategies, as well as the assessment of the UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF) for the 10 countries of the Sahel, underpin regional priorities that could help promote peace, stability and inclusive, sustainable development.

In the entire Sahel region, interdependent factors, such as extreme poverty, climate change, armed conflict and insecurity, drive the staggering levels of structural, chronic and acute vulnerabilities.

If these interconnected root causes are not addressed regionally, because of the fluidity of the Sahel context, challenges will grow in depth and numbers.

At the regional level, many organizations, coordination frameworks, platforms and initiatives have been established in the Sahel to promote and improve integration, address cross-border threats and challenges, and support collective and coordinated approaches that tackle these risks. Although these organizations have proven to be very relevant in complementing nationally anchored strategies, they continue to face constraints in meeting the complexity, multitude and scale of the challenges affecting the region. Some of constraints include low absorptive capacity, weak coordination mechanism, inability to ensure coherence with national development efforts, etc.

Recognizing the intrinsic complementarity of national and regional approaches in the region, the UN Support Plan for the Sahel is first and foremost an enabler that should help the UN and other partners accelerate and scale-up the delivery of existing national and regional strategies and initiatives under the UNISS framework, in line with Security Council resolution 2391 (2017).

It is expected to act as a conduit for tackling structural drivers of vulnerability, strengthening systems at all levels and galvanizing the coherence and the long-term engagement of partners' commitment in the Sahel. In this regard, the support plan reinforces regional institutions and intergovernmental capacities to implement programmes and strategies, coordination, assessment and risk-informed decision-making and better implementation of integrated approaches that efficiently address the humanitarian-development nexus and its linkages to peace in the Sahel.

The following six priority areas have been identified:

- Promoting cross-border and regional cooperation for stability and development;
- ii. Preventing and resolving conflicts; violent extremism and crime; and promoting access to justice and human rights;
- iii. Promoting inclusive and equitable growth and increasing quality access to basic services;
- iv. Building resilience to climate change, improving management of natural resource, and decreasing malnutrition and food insecurity;

- v. Promoting access to renewable energy; and
- vi. Empowering women and youth for peace and development in the Sahel.

Addressing the absorptive capacity of public service to effectively implement, monitor and sustain these priority interventions is key as is focusing strategic interventions on most vulnerable areas. Each priority action should emphasize building resilience in local communities and national institutions, while fostering inter-country knowledge and exchange; South-South Cooperation will be encouraged. The principles guiding the implementation of these interventions are national ownership and leadership, inclusion and local participation, gender mainstreaming, scalability and sustainability.

NOTE: For each of the six priority areas, an average of 3-5 strategic interventions, with very strong multipliers in addressing the root causes of the crisis through the humanitarian-development nexus and its linkages to peace, have been prioritized. Concrete achievable targets will be identified and clear accountability frameworks established.

PRIORITY ONE: Promoting cross-border and regional cooperation for stability and development.

- Objective: To foster human security and resilience
 to shocks and threats in the Sahel by strengthening
 local, national and regional authorities and actors'
 capacities to enhance governance, ensure social
 service delivery and basic rights, restore and
 improve security, stability and resilience in crossborder regions.
- 1.1 Support governments and regional entities with information systems and capacities, for risk informed policy decision-making, to mitigate and address impacts of disasters and hazards and recovery planning. (SDG: 13.1, 13.3, 13b)



- 1.2 Support ongoing efforts by the Member States of the Lake Chad Basin Commission to successfully implement their Stabilization Strategy and Programme, including the development plan for recharging of the Lake. (SDG: 12.2, 15.1, 15a)
- 1.3 Support Member States to restore degraded land, including through the implementation of the Great Green Wall. (SDG: 15.3)
- 1.4 Support effective governance at cross border regions for improving security, stability and resilience by strengthening national and regional institutions including the G5 Sahel (Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger, Mali and Mauritania); improving local governance, accountability, and enhancing social cohesion and participation of cross-border communities in development. (SDG: 1.4, 16.6, 16b)
- 1.5 Facilitate the implementation of safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility programme including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies in the 10 UNISS countries. (SDG: 10.7)

PRIORITY TWO: Preventing and resolving conflicts and building peace; preventing violent extremism and crime; and promoting access to justice and human rights.

- 2. Objective: To build peace and address the root causes of conflicts and violent extremism through prevention, good governance, social cohesion, response to human security threats, and access to justice outcomes with tangible impacts.
- 2.1 Build local infrastructure for peace and strengthen capacity of national institutions and communities to prevent conflict, violence, combat terrorism, crime and violent extremism, including through education, development programmes, and intercultural and interreligious dialogue. (SDG: 16.1; 16.4, 16a)
- 2.2 Strengthen rule of law, access to justice and human rights, including administration of justice, with emphasis on support for programmes to eliminate gender based violence and combating corruption. (SDG: 5.2, 5c, 16.3, 16.5)

2.3 Strengthening institutional capacity for citizens engagement, mediation and trust building to foster reconciliation and social cohesion in communities seriously affected by conflicts. (SDG: 16.7)

PRIORITY THREE: Promoting inclusive and equitable growth and increasing quality access to basic services.

- Objective: To address prevailing socioeconomic marginalization, vulnerabilities and limited access to basic services to boost and transform the economies of the countries of the region.
- 3.1 Promote economic growth, decent jobs and sustainable livelihoods with a special emphasis on women and youth, through vocational training, technological innovation, skills and entrepreneurship development. (SDG: 4.4, 5.1)
- 3.2 Promote quality universal health coverage, with special emphasis on access to essential medicines, vaccines and sexual and reproductive health-care services. (SDG: 3.7, 3.8, 3.c)
- **3.3** Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems, including cash transfers and social safety measures, for the population living in extreme poverty. (SDG: 1.2, 1.3)
- 3.4 Support national efforts to enable all girls and boys in school to complete equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes, including scaling up existing nutritional and school feeding programmes. (SDG: 2.1, 4.1, 4.5)

PRIORITY FOUR: Building resilience to climate change, improving management of natural resources, and decreasing malnutrition and food insecurity.

4. Objective: To help implement Nationally Determined Contributions, by building human and institutional resilience to shocks and vulnerabilities to climate change, and ensure food security for all the people of the Sahel.

- 4.1 Build the resilience and adaptive capacities of rural women and their communities to the impact of climate change, empower them and contribute to social cohesion, through regional programs such as the Climate-Smart Agriculture and Resilient Pastoralism Programme. (SDG: 2.2, 2.3, 2.4)
- **4.2** Promote land use planning and better governance of land and water to prevent and manage conflicts between farmers and pastoralists. (SDG: 1.4, 6.5)
- 4.3 Support national capacities to protect marine and coastal ecosystems, with emphasis on monitoring control, surveillance of illegal fishing and other infrastructure to support effective management of fish stock. (SDG: 9a, 14.2, 14.7)

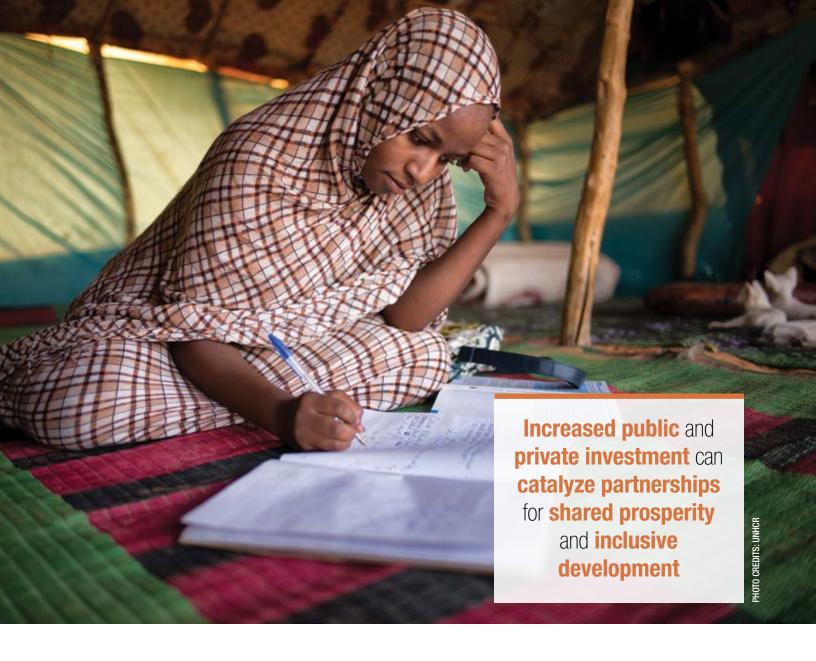
PRIORITY FIVE: Promoting access to renewable energy.

- 5. Objective: To increase on-grid and off-grid solutions to ensure access to affordable, clean and reliable energy services that can sustain economic growth as well as basic services.
- **5.1** Support improved access to affordable, clean, sustainable and reliable energy services, aiming at substantially improving the energy mix in the Sahel. (SDG: 7.1, 7.2)
- 5.2 Support Member States to develop policies conducive to private investments for renewable energies and the promotion of energy efficiency. (SDG: 17.14)
- 5.3 Promote the development of micro and small-scale enterprises in installing, repairing and servicing renewable energy facilities, including supporting start-up SMEs on energy efficiency and creating enabling economic conditions for sustain sustainable operations. (SDG: 7b, 8.3)
- 5.4 Ensure that clean and sustainable energy production in the Sahel supports the food production value chain, including agriculture, fisheries and pastoralism, so as to increase food productivity, reduce post-harvest loss and promote food processing. (SDG: 7a, 2.4)

PRIORITY SIX: Empowering women and youth for peace and development in the Sahel.

- 6. Objective: To address bottlenecks militating against women and youth attaining their full potential and empowering them as custodians of peace and development in the Sahel.
- 6.1 Increase the number of women and youth participating in leadership positions at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life. (SDG: 5.5)
- **6.2** Promote legislation to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services and inheritance, in accordance with national laws. (SDG: 5.a)





INVESTMENT NEEDS IN THE SAHEL

he resources required to achieve sustainable development and sustaining peace in the Sahel are beyond the capacity of national and regional public institutions. Unlocking opportunities through investment requires substantial efforts from the international community, including governments, regional actors, International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and the business community.

It will take blended approaches galvanized through publicprivate partnerships, facilitation of public goods through taxation, public debts, and ODA; rallying private sector investments; partnership with CSOs and Foundations; and leveraging South-South and Trilateral Cooperation for development exchange.

As an indication, the cost of implementing the SDGs in the Sahel is projected to be between \$140.25 billion and \$157.39 billion per year during the first phase of the Support Plan (between 2018 and 2022) in the 10 Sahelian countries (see Table 1). The public-sector funding gap, on average, remains at 36.2 percent of the required resources. In contrast, the Sahel accounted for 65 percent of the African average remittances for 2010-2016, reaching \$25 billion in 2015.

The good news is that incentives for investments in the Sahel lie in the region's inherent potentials, which can provide ample opportunities for developing bankable programmes for private sector/ multilateral financing. Some of the most important ones are: large-scale national and cross-country infrastructure development; massive renewable energy potential (e.g. solar, wind and hydro); large-scale value chain agriculture; oil and natural gas exploitation; natural resource extraction and processing. Other valuable investments potential also exists in the service sectors—tourism, education and health.

In addition, there is a strong commitment by the leadership of governments in the Sahel to create an environment that fosters a thriving private sector as the engine of economic growth in the region. In addition, the United Nations can help mobilize other partners such as CSOs and Foundations in leveraging grant financing to mitigate unforeseen risks to private sector investments.

Investing in the Sahel has enormous benefits transcending profit margins to impact investment that generates lasting values on individuals and societies. This is a unique added value. Thus, the successful investment in the Sahel will result in just and peaceful societies and a stable region for a population of over 300 million people.

Despite the development challenges facing the Sahel, governments' investments in development projects are still very high—about 87 percent between 2010 and 2016. The region's debt-GDP ratio, guided by international fiscal rules, remains sustainable. However, its tax-GDP ratio of 17.4 percent is comparable to continental average. The sectoral budget allocation has mostly been influenced by the conflict and security situations of the region—especially in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger—crowding out investments for long-term development efforts that promote resilience and are key to preventing shocks and vulnerabilities.

Between 2007 and 2015, international development financing support to the region was unstable: on average, it rose by 22 percent and peaked at \$11.2 billion in 2015. The flow of ODA to the region has not kept pace with the development complexity of the region. Although, on average, ODA has been rising, the declining trend on agriculture, education and reproductive health over the past four years is at variance with priorities of the Sahel countries. To avoid vulnerability to shocks, it is crucial to diversify external sources of funding.

Private sector in most of these countries is relatively undeveloped despite vast opportunities for investments in agriculture, extractive sectors, renewable energy,

Table 1. The Cost of implementing the SDGs in the Sahel (\$billion), 2018-2022						
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
CAMEROON	10.03	10.29	10.56	10.83	11.11	
NIGERIA	78.51	80.65	82.83	85.07	87.37	
CHAD	7.03	7.27	7.51	7.76	8.01	
BURKINA FASO	8.98	9.25	9.54	9.82	10.12	
GAMBIA	1.00	1.03	1.06	1.10	1.13	
GUINEA	6.21	6.38	6.56	6.75	6.93	
MALI	8.77	9.05	9.35	9.65	9.96	
MAURITANIA	1.99	2.04	2.09	2.14	2.20	
NIGER	10.22	10.65	11.10	11.58	12.07	
SENEGAL	7.53	7.76	8.00	8.24	8.49	
10 UNISS COUNTRIES	140.25	144.37	148.60	152.94	157.39	
10 UNISS COUNTRIES (EXC. NIGERIA)	61.74	63.72	65.76	67.86	70.02	

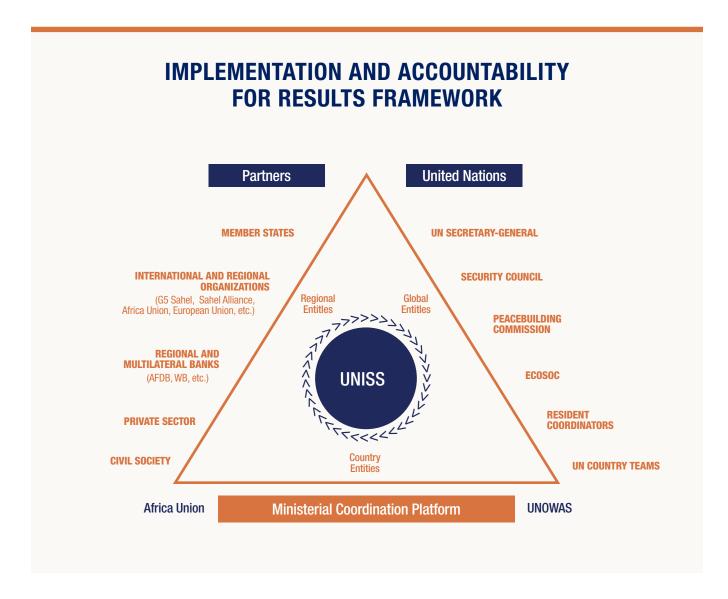
Source: UNDP estimated figures, based on the UNDESA population projection

communications, and manufacturing. Huge opportunities also exist in the value chains in agriculture and the extractives.

Using local content policy to promote private sector development to drive value chains in agriculture, fisheries and extractives is vital. Although FDI rose from \$1.69 billion in 2000 to \$8.64 billion in 2016, it was mostly in the extractive sector. Diversifying the FDIs into other sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, and communication could accelerate the transformation and inclusive development of the region. The Sahel accounted for 65 percent of the average remittances between 2010 and 2016, reaching \$25 billion in 2015. More needs to be allocated to productive activities. Diaspora bond also offers good opportunity for financing development plans and programmes.

The burden of financing development is more on the poor and marginalized people of the Sahel than on the rich. An average Sahelian pays more than 55 percent of healthcare expenses compared to 14.8 percent in Europe and 37.5 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean. It could be as high as 69 percent in Cameroon and 72 percent in Nigeria. High out-of-pocket expenses are often associated with high health burdens like infant, under-5, and maternal mortality deaths in the region.

Although the required investments needed for the SDGs are achievable globally, the financial capacity of Sahel countries to implement the SDGs is very limited. However, the world has a potentially huge capacity to mobilize needed resources for the Sahel.















AFFORDABLE AND













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QUALITY Education

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GOOD HEALTH And Well-Being



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES







16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

15 LIFE ON LAND

13 CLIMATE ACTION







UN SUPPORT PLAN FOR THE SAHEL
Working Together for a Prosperous and Peaceful Sahel