

Statement on the Introduction Section of the United Nations Secretary General's
ECOSOC Sahel Report (July 20, 2020)

Management Segment

Mr. NJOYA TIKUM

Director, UNDP Sub-Regional Hub for West and Central Africa in Dakar, Senegal

On behalf of the Chair of the Regional Entities of the UN Sustainable Development
Group (R-UNSDG) for West and Central Africa

1. His Excellency Ambassador Mona Juul, The President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Your Excellencies and members of the ECOSOC Bureau. Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives of Members States herein present at the Management Segment of the ECOSOC deliberation on the Sahel and South Sudan. Colleagues of the UN system, Ladies and Gentlemen, all protocols observed.
2. It is of great delight to be able to present an introductory segment of the Secretary General's report on the Sahel pursuant to resolution 2020/2. As you know, the resolution requested the SG to *inter alia* report on progress towards the UN system's collective implementation of the SDG in the Sahel region; framed within the context of the United Nations Integrated Strategy of the Sahel (UNISS) and the United Nations Sahel Support Plan (UNSP) which are at the center of the international response to the complexity of human development and security challenges faced in the Sahel.
3. Your Excellencies, I am presenting this introductory segment on behalf of the over 20 Agency Funds and Programmes, forming the Regional Entities of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (R-UNSDG), the UN Country Teams in the ten (10) UNISS countries, namely Cameroon, Chad, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal, the three UNISS pillar working groups on Security, Governance and Resilience, and colleagues from UNOWAS with whom we work closely to deliver on the UNISS implementation.
4. The Sahel report provides an overview of the dynamic contexts of the Sahel including with an analysis of the humanitarian, security, development and political contexts; to undergird the basis for the R-UNSDG interventions and programmatic investments in the areas of humanitarian-development nexus across the three pillars- Security, Governance and Resilience.

5. The report highlights the results of the cross-pillar interventions and the extent to which these relate to progress towards the achievements of the SDGs. In addition, the report depicts the coordination structure and overall leadership established on the ground to facilitate coherence cross pillar interventions as well as to effectively engage government and partners in the delivery of UNISS and UNSP priorities. Finally, the report provides a forward-looking analysis of the ongoing challenges and how the UN system is positioning collectively to address them.
6. Your Excellencies, as I present this introductory element of the SG ECOSOC report on the Sahel, permit me to highlight a few observations derived from the report, which are also inspired by our interaction with the Sahelian people to support them in their own communities to address the complex humanitarian and development challenges that they are faced with.
7. Firstly, keeping the Sahel high on the international agenda is of utmost importance – and even more so as we face this global human crisis. Some countries are more vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic than others. And some are better prepared than others to face it. The countries in the Sahel are no exception. We know that the political, social and economic impacts of the coronavirus are exacerbating pressure, especially on the Group of Five (G-5 Sahel) countries, which were already under extreme stress. While COVID-19 has put a pause on the world, it has certainly not put a pause on terrorism, poverty and climate change.
8. In order to achieve peace and sustainable development, and to shift from delivering humanitarian aid to reducing and ending humanitarian needs, we must tackle the root causes of conflict and crises. These are found in discrimination, human rights violations, weak governance, conflict, and the impact of climate change. Only a collective, integrated and inclusive approach, owned and led by the countries of the region, will support sustained progress towards the lasting peace and development that are so urgently needed in the Sahel.
9. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers just such an approach, and the Sahel region will be the litmus test. If we fail for the most vulnerable in the Sahel, we fail a generation of young people and the future of peace in the sub-region. It's as simple as that.

10. Secondly, the complex security, humanitarian and development challenges faced by the Sahel requires urgent attention, programme upscale, which are accompanied by significant resources. Thus far, only 20% of the \$3.4 billion required for the 24.9 million in humanitarian need have been met. And approximately USD 5.6 billion is required to bring the development response in the Sahel to scale.
11. Thirdly, there is need to deepen national and international commitment towards accentuating investments in governance and stabilization. This should be done with a focus on strengthening state-citizen relations, natural resource governance, local governance, public administration and state capacity to deliver services to its people. There is need to invest in the opportunity provided by the demographic dividend comprising over 150 million youth who are under the age of 25 years to create jobs and sustain peace in the decade of action.
12. Fourthly, there is need to strengthen the visibility of the work of the UN, which is collectively undertaken in close concert with Sahelian people on the ground to inspire hope, consolidate peace and strengthen resilience as foundational elements towards sustainable development.
13. Finally, there is need to strengthen coordination to provide coherent engagement with our partners in support of national humanitarian and development efforts. A strong coordination structure, under the leadership of the SRSG of UNOWAS, with national governments and other regional entities including the G5-Sahel secretariat will also be useful in supporting socio-economic post COVID-19 government's response in alignment with the UNISS and UNSP.
14. Your Excellencies, I hope these observations will be useful and duly considered in your ensued deliberations on the report.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION
