



German Development Minister Svenja Schulze takes over Presidency of the Sahel Alliance

On 10 July 2023, Development Minister Svenja Schulze will take over the Presidency of the Sahel Alliance. The Alliance coordinates international support in the five Sahel countries: Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad. The total support for all the initiatives and investments funded by the members of the Sahel Alliance is about 28 billion euros. This means that the Sahel Alliance is the region's biggest alliance of international supporters.

The Sahel has a wealth of natural resources, additional – so far unused – possibilities for agricultural production, a young population and huge renewable energy potential. At the same time, however, it is a region with high levels of poverty that has been hit by multiple crises: droughts brought about by climate change, cross-border terrorism, fragile statehood, movements of refugees in the region and food insecurity, also as a result of Russia's war of aggression.

AIMS OF THE GERMAN PRESIDENCY

For Minister Schulze, domestic security and social protection are inextricably linked. It is mostly poverty and a lack of prospects that pushes young people into the clutches of groups with an inclination towards violence.

During her Presidency, she therefore wants to put a strong focus on making every effort to:

→ „Deliver better“

by orienting the work of the Sahel Alliance even more towards making direct improvements for the people living in the region. The Sahel is also becoming more and more of an area of interest for Russia and extremism is on the rise. The Sahel Alliance members want to and can do more as a group to counter these tendencies.

→ „Communicate jointly“

the Alliance members should work together to make its activities more visible in the partner countries. This also includes making every effort to speak with one voice when talking to the governments in the Sahel.

→ „Coordinate stronger“

the initiatives and programmes for supporting the region should be better coordinated with one another so that they achieve more for the people living in the region.

THE PRIORITIES FOR THE GERMAN PRESIDENCY ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Creating paths out of the crisis by offering more education, training and employment

Education and jobs make it easier for people to steer clear of extremist groups. Most of the young people in the Sahel do not get recruited by terrorist groups because of religious convictions. In many cases they just need an income. A new programme offered by the Sahel Alliance is intended to provide additional education and training opportunities.

2. Making societies more resilient through social protection and food security

Social protection strengthens local self-help powers. Through the work of the Sahel Alliance, national systems for basic social services are being expanded so that people are better able to withstand crises and climate-related shocks. Furthermore, the Sahel Alliance will drive forward long-term solutions for food security that go beyond providing emergency relief. With that aim in mind, the resilience initiative with the World Food Programme and UNICEF is to be expanded, for example. The initiative is training farmers in ways to also grow food in arid regions, for instance, so that they are able to feed themselves by their own efforts, because delivering sacks of grain and tanks of water is not a sustainable solution.

3. Recovering areas that the government has lost control over and providing people with basic services

Strong municipal structures build trust and social cohesion. They provide the necessities for living such as water, healthcare, education and market places. This makes it possible for the people in the Sahel to establish a solid basis for their lives and for earning an income, removing the breeding ground for extremism. That is why the Sahel Alliance will be increasing its support for municipal structures.

The only way to achieve a long-term improvement in the situation is if the entire population is included. During her Presidency, Minister Schulze will therefore put a special focus on empowering girls and women. They are often the income-earners and the ones who are responsible for taking care of the family. Making them a special focus is a basic human duty and also makes sense in development terms.



G5-SAHEL

In order to be better able to deal with the challenges in the Sahel and coordinate more closely with one another on economic, social and environmental issues, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger came together in 2014 to form the regional organisation G5-Sahel. Mali has declared that it is suspending its G5 membership until further notice. The organisation has its headquarters in Nouakchott (<https://www.g5sahel.org/>).



SAHEL-ALLIANZ

Germany, France and the European Union founded the Sahel Alliance in July 2017 in order to give the G5 countries better support through development cooperation. Other countries and organisations soon joined them. Today the Sahel Alliance has 18 members and nine observers (<https://www.alliance-sahel.org/en/>). Spain's Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares was the Alliance President before Germany took over. The portfolio of measures being carried out by all the members of the Sahel Alliance adds up to more than 1,300 projects. By end of 2022, the total funding for these measures was about 28 billion euros. The majority of this funding goes into four areas: good governance, decentralisation and basic services, agriculture and food security, and energy.

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