In 2013 the United Nations made a bold decision to confront the Sahel crisis. It deployed results-focused multidimensional approach through the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS). The UNISS aims to address the root causes of the Sahel crisis (10 countries) with special focus on Women and Youth. The UNISS was recently given renewed impetus through the operationalization of the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel (UNSP).

In line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2391 of December 2017, the UNSP is not a new strategy or a new programme, but an articulation of a concrete action plan and mechanisms to accelerate collective delivery of human development interventions in the Sahel region.

The UNSP focused United Nations (UN) interventions in the Sahel along six priorities forming its strategic focus: cross border cooperation, climate action, crisis prevention, women and youth empowerment, economic revitalization and renewable energy.

These strategic priorities are variously implemented by the Regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group (RUNSDG) comprising over 20 Agencies, Funds and Programmes working in the Sahel in close collaboration with the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the Governments of the Sahelian people.
ACRONYMS

AFD  Agence française de développement
AIRCOP  Airport Communication Programme
BMZ  German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
BPRM  Bureau of Population Refugee and Migration
COOPI  Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
CTED  Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate
DFID  Department for International Development
ECHO  European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
FAO  Food and Agriculture Organization
GIZ  German Society for International Cooperation
ICHARM  International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management
ICTs  Information and Communication Technologies
ICRC  International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
INTERPOL  International Criminal Police Organization
IRC  International Rescue Committee
ISU  Implementation Support Unit
LCBC  Lake Chad Basin Commission
LGA  Liptako-Gourma Authority
MINUSMA  Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MIDAS  Migration Information and Data Analysis System
OCHA  UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR  Office of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
PBF  Peacebuilding Funds
PVE  Prevent Violent Extremism
RRRP  Nigeria Regional Refugees Response Plan
R-UNSDG  Regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group
SBCC  Social and Behavioural Change Communication
SOM  Smuggling of Migrants
SWEDD  Sahel Women’s Empowerment and Demographic Dividend
TIP  Trafficking in Persons
UN-ECA  United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNODC  United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNFPA  United Nations Population Fund
UNOWAS  United Nations Office for West Africa and Sahel
UNISS  United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel
UNSP  United Nations Sahel Support Plan
UNICEF  United Nations Children’s Fund
UNCTTF  United Nations Counter Terrorism Task Force
UNCAC  United Nations Convention against Corruption
UNDP  United Nations Development Programme
UN Women  United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNHCR  United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WAHO  West African Health Organization
WFP  World Food Programme
© UNFPA/Céline-Andree Adotevi
Unschooled girls in a SWEDD Safe space, Kiffa, Mauritania
CONTENTS

- Foreword by R-UNSDG
- 1. Introduction
- 2. Flagship Programmes
- 3. Increased Regional Investment
- 4. UNISS Pillar Achievements through Joint Actions
  - Governance
  - Security
  - Resilience
- 5. Implementation Challenges
- 6. Way Forward:
  - R-UNSDG Positioning to Accelerate the Implementation of UNISS

“The time has come for the urgent mobilization to support countries and people of the Sahel.”

António Guterres
United Nations Secretary-General
The Sahel region presents some of the most important development challenges in recent history, with a commensurate magnitude of effects on communities, peoples and states. The crisis has devastating impact on the most precious resources of the Sahel people—women and youth. Since 2013 the United Nations (UN) has joined forces with the World Bank, the European Union, the African Development Bank, regional organizations and other institutions to confront these multidimensional crises.

The UN has developed a results-focused multidimensional approach through the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS), around key priorities in governance, security and resilience. Our initiative was designed to address the root causes of the Sahel crisis while supporting national and regional capacities for peacebuilding. The degradation of the security environment, combined with aggravating environmental and humanitarian hardships, have required significant adjustments in the UN response. We have scaled up our interventions and mobilized increasing resources for targeted areas including the Lake Chad Basin and the Liptako-Gourma region. The UNISS was given renewed impetus in 2019 through the operationalization of the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel (UNSP), articulated around six priorities: cross border cooperation, climate action, crisis prevention, women and youth empowerment, economic revitalization and renewable energy.

To respond to the multidimensional crisis in the Sahel, our approach has brought together the political and strategic oversight of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel, UN capacities in the region, namely the Regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group (R-UNSDG) comprising over 20 Agencies, Funds and Programme and country-based entities, and departments based at Headquarters. This integration has enabled us to build and develop a vast network of implementing partners. Under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), Head of UNOWAS, the UN system has recently adopted a division of labor with a comprehensive matrix that defines roles, assigns responsibilities and ensures accountability. This is an innovative model of applying the Nexus in action and we hope it inspires other regions. Given the complexity and the fluidity of the Sahel crisis, the R-UNSDG in particular is working assiduously across the three pillars of Governance, Security, and Resilience aligned to the UN reforms and the United Nations Secretary General's crisis prevention framework for sustaining peace and peacebuilding in the region.

This report presents some of the notable achievements of the R-UNSDG working hand in hand with the people of the Sahel, national governments and regional organizations. The accomplishments described represent a fraction of the work of the R-UNSDG across the 10 countries under UNISS namely, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and The Gambia. These results are intentionally field based, enabling us to share our interaction with the communities and the most vulnerable groups, with civil society organizations and government entities. This is a tribute to their indomitable spirit and resilience, which give us so much inspiration.

We take the opportunity to thank our donors and implementing partners. Together, we will continue to strive for the region’s long-term stability and prosperity.

Ahunna Eziakonwa  
Chair of the R-UNSDG, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa

Ruby Sandhu-Rojon  
Co-Chair of UNISS Implementation Support Unit, Deputy of the Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS)

Mabingue Ngom  
Co-chair of UNISS Implementation support unit, Regional Director of the United Nations Population Fund for West and Central Africa (UNFPA WCARO)
“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.”

Amina J. Mohammed
United Nations Deputy Secretary-General
The Sahel, 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 endowed with abundant human, cultural and natural resources, offering tremendous potential for rapid growth. Yet there are deep-rooted ecological, political, human rights and security challenges affecting the prosperity and lasting peace of the region. The Sahelian countries are classified among the low human development countries, with the 2018 HDI (Human Development Index) ranking them from the highest, 150 for Cameroon to the lowest, 189 for Niger (out of 189 countries measured). Together, the geographical expanse cover about 7 million square kilometers with a population of more than 300 million people, characterized by a high population growth rate ranging between 2.6 and 3.8 percent. The area includes mostly arid and semi-arid places; and climate has a strong influence on the day-to-day economic development of the region, particularly in terms of access to water, food security, health, ecosystems, and livelihoods.

In recent times the region has experienced frequent attacks by violent extremists and emergence of jihadists’ movements, which are threatening any human development gains. Conflict remains one of the main drivers of the humanitarian crisis and growing insecurity is expected to worsen in 2020 thus impacting further humanitarian needs.

Violence is threatening civilians' lives and heightening protection needs, particularly for children and women. In a context of rising insecurity and high vulnerability; human rights violations including sexual and gender-based violence have been on the rise and the situation in the Sahel is making principled humanitarian action more and more challenging. Despite this, the Sahelian people have proven to be resilient and taken a firm stand to address the complex human security and development challenges facing them. Therefore, the United Nations Secretariat, Agencies, Funds, Programmes and Country Teams, are working assiduously with the people of the Sahel to meet their objective to establish a peaceful and prosperous Sahel. The UN is doing this under the auspices of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS), which is at the center of the international response in the Sahel in accordance with Security Council Resolution 2391 (2017).

The implementation of the UNISS was recently given impetus through the rolling out of the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel (UNSP 2018-2030). The UNSP is an instrument to foster greater coherence and coordination among UN entities in scaling up efforts to accelerate shared prosperity and lasting peace in the region. The Support Plan targets 10 countries namely Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and The Gambia.
It prioritizes six thematic areas, which are:

1. Cross-border cooperation
2. Prevention and sustaining peace
3. Inclusive growth
4. Climate action
5. Renewable energy
6. Women and youth empowerment

These priorities are at the center of the root causes of the human insecurity in the region and, are critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the Africa Union’s Agenda 2063 when adequately implemented with human rights based approach.

This report spells out selected Regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group (R-UNSDG) programme achievements as part of the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS). These accomplishments, which are intimately aligned to the six priorities of the UNSP, the SDG and the Africa Union’s agenda 2063, are the result of joint programmes and cross-border initiatives implemented across various countries. And they are based on the collaborative efforts of over 20 Agencies, Funds, and Programmes (AFPs) and are organized under the three pillars of the UNISS namely: Governance, Security, and Resilience.

Over the past two years, the R-UNSDG has made concerted efforts to integrate the three pillars - Governance, Security, and Resilience - in a coordinated manner across multiple countries and has done so with substantial success. Selected main achievements have been described in the succeeding sections of this report.
2.1 The Education Cannot Wait global funding programme helps to transform the delivery of education in emergency situations in the Sahel, with special focus in Northern Nigeria, Cameroon, and Mali. The programme, jointly implemented by humanitarian actors, is so far providing over 150,000 displaced children in the Lake Chad Basin with access to education, and enacting measures to bring uninterrupted schooling to every child in Mali. This includes offering textbooks and other equipment to support teachers and students going back to school and sponsoring radio broadcasts on the right to education.

UNICEF in Nigeria is building on the success of the partnership with "Education Cannot Wait" with a new multi-year resilience package to strengthen the humanitarian development nexus. It also has a new joint programme with UNDP and IOM in partnership with the European Union on socio-economic reintegration and community cohesion involving former combatants, some of whom are children associated with armed forces and groups.

2.2 In July 2019, UNDP launched the $100 million regional Stabilization Facility for the Lake Chad to scale up interventions in critical areas of the Lake Chad basin covering Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. The Stabilization Facility for the Lake Chad serves as a rapid response mechanism to help the local authorities contain the effects of Boko Haram insurgency by restoring livelihoods, extending effective civilian security and improving the delivery of basic service. Through the Lake Chad Governors’ Forum, local authorities have embraced collective obligations to restore hope to affected populations, especially women and youth who have been most affected by this plight. The local authorities are seeking to end the spiral of insecurity and forced displacements necessitated by conflict and build the foundations for longer term recovery and development. At the same time, this regional facility integrates civilian-military approaches, with a strong emphasis on livelihoods and resilience. In each of the four basin countries, joint action plans have been developed with the local communities and states. Also, joint assessments have been conducted to identify development areas and implementation is on course to help stabilize critical areas forming the hotspots of the Boko Haram crisis.

The Stabilization Facility for the Lake Chad serves as a rapid response mechanism to help the local authorities contain the effects of Boko Haram insurgency by restoring livelihoods, extending effective civilian security and improving the delivery of basic services.

2.3 An initiative by UN Women to promote women’s rights and leadership in the Sahel region as part of efforts to Prevent Violent Extremism (PVE) in Chad, Mali, Niger and Nigeria resulted in the development of the Bamako Declaration on Gender and Violent Extremism. The Declaration, which was a real breakthrough, has led to the establishment of a regional platform for women leadership for the Sahel.

2.4 The Sahel Women’s Empowerment and Demographic Dividend (SWEDD) project, which was launched by the United Nations and the World Bank Group, is a response to a call made by the Presidents of six countries (including the G5): Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. Benin joined the initiative in January 2019. The goals of the project are to accelerate the demographic transition, to spur the demographic dividend, and to reduce gender inequality in the Sahel region. The ambitious SWEDD programme, led by UNFPA with WAHO) and partners, has established itself as a benchmark initiative to convert population growth into an economic dividend. By deploying a promising and futuristic theory of change ideal alongside an effective, social and behavioural change communication (SBCC) strategy, SWEDD has kept girls in school, promoted entrepreneurship among women and reinvigorated the reproductive health message. Though SWEDD operates in a difficult and complex environment it has achieved these milestones through a rigorous implementation of its strategic plan which calls for stakeholder inclusion. Embracing inclusiveness by engaging family-based approaches of co-opting religious and traditional leaders as key partners has boosted SWEDDs successes.

Though SWEDD operates in a difficult and complex environment it has achieved these milestones through a rigorous implementation of its strategic plan which calls for stakeholder inclusion. Embracing inclusiveness by engaging family-based approaches of co-opting religious and traditional leaders as key partners has boosted SWEDD’s successes.
The regional Social and Behavioral Change Communication (SBCC) campaigns have increased awareness reaching more than 300 million people.

Nearly 206,000 girls and young women have benefited from interventions that support school enrolment, retention, technical, vocational training, and entrepreneurship, particularly in innovative professions and occupations that were traditionally a preserve of men.

The establishment of 3,251 safe spaces, helped 116,247 out-of-school girls to successfully attend and complete literacy and life skills courses.

The participation of men and boys for better gender equality is promoted through 1,640 clubs for husbands and future husbands.

In Mauritania, 100 micro-enterprises benefiting 1,200 young women are participating in safe-space activities which are set up in four Sahel crisis affected regions.

In Mali, the project has led to a 12 per cent increase in the total number of midwives through training and deployment in rural areas. This has increased access to reproductive health products including in remote areas largely affected by violent extremism. The SWEDD project continues to offer its three advanced master’s degree programmes in nursing and obstetrics and supporting midwifery training schools with a focus on rural areas, internship sites, and clinical mentorship.

2.5 UN Women has made significant strides empowering women economically through participation in the agricultural value chain. Thus, with an investment of $10 million from private sector and donor partners, UN Women’s flagship project: ‘Empowering Women Through Climate Resilient Agriculture Value Chains’ has already benefitted over 30,000 women agri-business entrepreneurs directly and many more indirectly. Leveraging information and communication technologies (ICTs) to provide access to farmers by using a digital platform, known as Buy-From-Women have enabled small-scale farmers mostly women and youth to connect to extension services, and markets. Critical agricultural concerns such as cultivation techniques, customers, suppliers, information, markets, and finance are some of the issues addressed by the extension services with an aim to fortify their economic identity and to transform them into valued entrepreneurs who can mitigate food insecurity in the Sahel. By combining many innovative tools, the programme works with more than 30,000 rural women across the Sahel region notably Niger, Chad, Mali and Senegal to modernize their cultivation techniques, including water usage, crop scheduling, pesticide and fertilizer use, to increase their capacities to adopt climate-resilient agricultural production practices by 2020. The initiative is a joint programme of the UN with the GS Secretariat and involves UNDP, FAO, UNICEF, UN Women, WFP, IOM, UNFPA, and OCHA.

2.6 The 1 million cisterns for the Sahel programme is a new water-gathering and storage systems initiative led by FAO and in complementarity
with other agencies like WFP. In collaboration with UN women, the programme principally focuses on vulnerable women in rural communities, in six countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger, Senegal and The Gambia) affected by climate shocks. Inspired by a Brazilian programme “Fome Zero” the programme is benefitting about 5 million people across the Sahel with access to water, including safe drinking water and for agricultural usage. In addition to water, the initiative seeks to provide climate-resilient agricultural products and support their commercialization. The programme also trains farmers on agro-ecological practices, together with the construction and maintenance of cisterns. The broader objective of the programme is to create job opportunities; and extend social safety nets to vulnerable women in rural communities and assist them to break from the vicious cycle of poverty.

2.7 The Scaling-up resilience program in the G5 Sahel countries aims at building resilience and improving livelihoods of the most vulnerable in chronically food insecure and risk-prone environments, reducing the impact of seasonal stress, and investing in productive assets, food systems, education, nutrition and health. Following a joint, multi-sectoral and multi-partner approach and leveraging government-led, community-owned solutions, the program invests in the resilience of individuals, households, communities and systems.

Since end-2018, WFP has been scaling-up integrated interventions in the Sahel, supporting vulnerable communities through asset creation, livelihoods, nutrition, school feeding as well as capacity building activities. Constituting a strong driver for joint, geographically convergent and integrated action between UN partners, UNICEF is working to complement this resilience building package through further investment in the same communities in WASH, health, nutrition and education, as well as social protection in three priority countries (Mali, Niger and Mauritania). Synergies with other UN partners, particularly FAO and IFAD are prioritised across the region.
INCREASED REGIONAL INVESTMENT
The Rome-based agencies (RBAs) and UNICEF have ramped up their regional investments in the Sahel as part of UNISS implementation. The objectives of the investments are to strengthen the resilience of the livelihoods of the most vulnerable populations to access food security, nutrition, and sustained peace.

The investment focuses on the following areas:

- **Scaling up integrated resilience programmes for the Sahel, particularly for the G5 countries (2018–2023).** The budget is $11 billion, of which $280 million has been mobilized by WFP for integrated projects. This programme builds resilience of individuals, households, communities and systems by improving the livelihoods of the most vulnerable in food insecure and risk-prone environments. It further aims to reduce the impact of seasonal stress, by investing in productive assets, climate resilient food systems, education, and nutrition.

- **Strengthening the resilience of livelihoods in protracted crises Niger.** Based on the RBAs’ joint conceptual framework for strengthening resilience for food security and nutrition, the agencies support and invest in the same vulnerable communities over a five-year period (2017–2022) through integrated, context-specific, gender- and nutrition-sensitive assistance. (This multi-year, multi-country project covering Niger, Somalia and DRC is funded by Canada (the RBAs in Niger receive USD 11.8 million).

“We cannot solve the problems of the Sahel by only looking at the challenges. We need to look at the opportunities and make investments in the region’s potential, such as in the renewable energy sector, to transform the economy and tackle the problem of poverty and exclusion.”

Ahunna Eziakonwa
United Nations Development Programme Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa
4

UNISS PILLAR ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGH STRONG JOINT ACTIONS
“Governance interventions have a strategic focus on cross-border regions”

At the community level, we seek to increase investments by augmenting the role of local authorities: civic education and public sensitization to facilitate the participation of women and youth in decision-making remains a priority for engaging national partners. The administration of the security sector, as well as improved border crossing management for human security, are two approaches being used to strengthen sub-regional integration. Strengthening the national infrastructure for peace, particularly in volatile regions, and increasing intervention capabilities for cross-border mediation and reconciliation remain key priorities.

Extension of state authority, strengthening natural resource governance, enhancing human rights; civic education and public sensitization to facilitate the participation of women and youth in decision-making remain priority for engaging national partners.

The Liptako-Gourma Authority (LGA), which has received USD 8 million from the Swedish Government is an example of a successful multi-agency cross-border partnership located at the confluence of the border provinces of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. This project is being implemented jointly, ensuring that UN’s efforts at the national and regional levels are coherent and complementary, while strengthening the humanitarian-development-security nexus, social cohesion and human rights protection. The programme promotes local development with the local communities and authorities. At the same time, it is a capacity building initiative, strengthening the administrative and human capacity of the regional entity, LGA, to respond to its core mandate.

Under Priority Area Six of the UNISS Support Plan for the Sahel, UNDP and UN-ECA have teamed up to strengthen LGA’s financial mechanism to facilitate efficient implementation and realization of regional priorities and programs. The joint programme has been validated by the LGA and its Ministerial Council.

UNDP and UNOPS are finalizing a joint energy project to be financed by Sweden. The project aims to address the SDG Goal #7 which corresponds to UNISS Priority Area #5 that calls for the promotion of “access to renewable energy.” The initiative will support the implementation of the LGA regional energy programme and rural electrification benefitting about 30,000 households inhabiting the borders regions of the Liptako-Gourma region.

The energy initiative will support the implementation of the Liptako-Gourma regional energy programme and rural electrification targeting to benefit about 30,000 households inhabiting the borders regions.

With a total budget of USD 3 million sourced from the Peacebuilding Funds (PBF), the UNDP Country Offices in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, have extended their support to the national governments of the three countries, to support the “Promotion of community security and social cohesion in the Liptako-Gourma” region. The project which was an operational product of UNISS had a timeframe of 18 months. The project sought to create income generating activities for youth including women, promoting collaboration and reducing conflicts between security agencies, local authorities and border communities.

This project provided some 300 young people with equipment, enabled them to improve on their capacities in diverse occupational fields and jumpstarted income generating activities. This programme is particularly implemented in Dori in Burkina Faso and in Bamako, Mali with the view to address communal conflicts and youth recruitments for violent extremism.
In Mali, the Youth for National Peace and Reconciliation programme is helping to inspire the commitment of youth and women as actors of peace to strengthen social harmony, communal dialogue, coexistence, and the development of youth potential. The programme involving over 2,500 youth between the ages of 15 and 35, of whom 900 are women, in 25 municipalities in the Mopti and Segou regions, is helping to build their capacity as agents of peace and reconciliation. This joint programme is implemented by UNESCO, UNICEF, and IOM with support from PBSO and in collaboration with MINUSMA.

The implementation of the Nigeria Regional Refugees Response Plan (RRRP-2019/2020) is providing lasting solutions that will benefit refugees and their host communities in the Lake Chad Basin. The RRRP, which is joint initiative of UNDP and UNHCR on the integration and resilience of refugees and their hosts communities is benefiting over 228,500 refugee populations from Chad, Cameroon, and Niger; working with over 75,000 host communities.
Implemented in Burkina Faso, Chad, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal, targeting about 20,000 youths overall, Young Actors for Peace in the Sahel, is a UNDP-led programme encouraging civic engagement to counter radicalization. This project mobilizes young women and men in preventing and combating violent extremism through establishing “Youth Houses for Peace”, promoting democracy, women’s rights, and a culture of non-violence and peace. This has helped to amplify youth voice in political discourses, negotiations and democratic solutions.

Through the efforts of UNOWAS and the R-UNSDG, the “Access to Justice in the Sahel” initiative was inaugurated by the G5 Sahel Permanent Secretariat and the respective G5 Sahel countries. This initiative ensued from the preventive diplomacy efforts, which culminated in an international conference on “Impunity, Access to Justice, and Human Rights” organized by UNOWAS, UNDP, OHCHR, and UN Women under the auspices of the President of the Republic and the Minister of Justice of Niger. As an outcome of the conference, a Platform of Ministers of Justice of ECOWAS is now set up to ensure access to justice for vulnerable communities and groups based on the commitments undertaken by participating states at the international, continental, and regional levels. This is a significant breakthrough.
“Terrorism is a global issue, and the entire international community has a responsibility to contribute to the collective effort of tackling extremist violence in the Sahel, along with other cross-border challenges, including trafficking in persons, illicit goods, weapons and drugs, and migration and displacement.”

António Guterres
United Nations Secretary-General

“Crime continues to hinder socio-economic development and threatens stability”

Investments in initiatives that support security and criminal justice institutions are expanding in the region, with special emphasis on transboundary communities. Empowering youth and women as agents of peace and development in the Sahel still remains a priority. Through partnership with the G5 Sahel and collaboration with the Joint Force, which is a vital counter-terrorism response the Security Pillar has been able to achieve impressive operational results in the region.

The Sahel Programme of UNODC coordinates the implementation of assistance in G5 Sahel countries by strengthening the capacity of governments to combat drug smuggling, illicit trafficking, organized crime, terrorism, and corruption. This is done by enhancing the accessibility, efficiency, and accountability of criminal justice systems.

“Initiatives that support security and criminal justice institutions are expanding in the region, with special emphasis on transboundary communities, empowering youth and women as agents of peace and development in the Sahel still remains a priority.”

Cross-border and regional cooperation: UNODC, INTERPOL, and the World Customs Organizations are implementing an Airport Communication Programme (AIRCOP), which is strengthening the capacities of international airports to detect and intercept drugs, illicit goods, and high-risk passengers.
OHCHR and UNODC are assisting the G5 Sahel in its coordinated mission to combat terrorism and transnational organized crime by promoting respect for human rights and justice. To prevent and address human rights violations, OHCHR has developed a compliance framework to ensure the protection of civilians and an enabling working environment for security officers. The G5 Sahel Joint Force has adopted a code of conduct and procedures manual on the imprisonment and custody of detainees accompanied with established internal mechanisms to investigate alleged violations. A police component is also being operationalized to ensure the transparent and efficient judicial follow-up of military operations, supported by UNODC. Among the main results are the implementation of provost gendarmes with military battalions to prevent and investigate human rights violations, the establishment of specialized investigative units in Chad and Mauritania, and the creation of a specialized anti-terrorism investigations brigade in Burkina Faso, as well as the deployment of counter-terrorism investigators embedded alongside military operations in Niger.

Border police posts, mobile border control units, and immigration offices have been built and some modernized in 40 locations in the past four years across the Greater Sahel.

IOM is supporting Sahel countries to ensure the mobility of border communities and to balance the competing needs for movement and security. Infrastructure such as border police posts, mobile border control units, and immigration offices have been built and some modernized in 40 locations in the past four years across the Greater Sahel.

Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS), IOM’s border management information system, has been installed in seven countries at the request of their respective governments to facilitate the collection and analysis of data at select border crossings. IOM has also been working with governments to improve preparation and responses to protect those who cross borders in emergency situations and guarantee border safety. 12 cross-border crisis Simulation Exercises (SimEx) have been conducted to assist an estimated 15,000 persons.

To promote access to justice and human rights, UNODC and OHCHR in the framework of the Dutch-funded PROMIS project are strengthening the capacities of West African states to develop human rights-based responses to the trafficking and smuggling of migrants. Countries have achieved
normative results with the adoption of new National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons (TIP) in Mali and on the Smuggling of Migrants (SOM) in Niger. Mali has also enacted two laws on TIP and SOM, while a bill on SOM has been drafted in Senegal. At the operational level, two Nigerian liaison magistrates have been deployed to Italy and Spain to facilitate international judicial cooperation on cases of TIP and SOM: 35 cases are ongoing, 10 mutual legal assistance requests have been satisfied, several investigations were opened, and prisoner exchange between Italy and Niger was facilitated.

In Niger, UNODC is partnering with the United Nations Volunteer (UNV) Programme to promote access to justice. It has recruited and trained 10 (UNVs) as judicial experts to review cases of detained terror suspects and increased access to legal aid services. As of November 2019, more than 1,000 persons had been released and 250 convicted.

Some 5 million people had access to justice in Mali in 2018 which accounted for an estimated 10 per cent improvement over the previous year. This was made possible, by UNDP’s rehabilitation of 10 detention facilities six judges’ housing units, bolstering the capacity of 350 prison administration personnel and supervised education in collaboration with MINUSMA.

The Governments of Chad, Cameroon, Niger, and Nigeria with assistance from the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), UNODC, UNDP, IOM, and the African Union strive to bring to justice, persons who have committed atrocities as part of the Boko Haram insurgency. This includes establishing screening criteria to determine whether a person should be investigated, prosecuted or rehabilitated and reintegrated. While emphasizing the need for justice, accountability, and reparation for victims, this holistic approach had resulted in offsetting further potential for conflict and to lay the foundations for long lasting peace through the rehabilitation and reintegration of affected persons, back into society.

Addressing Corruption in the Sahel region: Sahel countries have taken steps to prevent, mitigate, and investigate corruption. Officials from Chad expressed their interest in acceding to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and in fighting the vice in their country with the assistance of UNODC. Chad signed the Convention on June 26, 2018. With the accession of Chad, the G5 Sahel countries can now have harmonized legislation and a common basis to fight against malfeasance. In addition, anti-corruption strategies for the police, gendarmerie, and customs agencies are being implemented in Burkina Faso.
Nigeria has rolled out an ethics and integrity training programme for drug law enforcement units. In January 2019, Burkina Faso launched a new anti-corruption master’s programme at Ouaga II University to promote a culture of integrity and increase the pool of future professionals in the fight against graft.

“The G5 Sahel countries can now have harmonized legislation and a common basis to fight against malfeasance.

**Gender and security:** UN Women and UNCTTF are implementing joint programmes to promote reform in the gender and security sector within G5 countries. This programme is conceived as part of a prospective comprehensive security sector reforms programme planned for the G5 countries. As part of this initiative, about 100 security officers have benefitted from targeted training in gender protection at the Ecole de Maintien de la Paix in Mali.

UNODC and UN Women have rolled out a bespoke initiative mobilizing and engaging women comprising of those living in vulnerable communities, working as defense and security actors, together with professionals working in relevant anti-crime agencies operating in the border areas of Mali and Niger as peacemakers. The main objectives, of the project: “Support for cross-border community dialogue initiatives with security and justice sector actors for peace-building” is to rebuild trust through a gender-centred approach. The programme is helping to promote cross-border dialogue initiatives, peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms, and awareness raising on criminal procedures.

UNFPA in collaboration with WFP, CPIE/UNICEF, UNHCR, UN Women, OCHA, IOM, European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), ICRC, IRC, and GBV AoR REGA and the 11 countries of Burkina Faso, Camereroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal who are, members of the Regional Protection Working Group, have developed a comprehensive strategy on Gender Based Violence (GBV) to provide a framework for the prevention and responses to gender-based violence in humanitarian situations in West and Central Africa including the Sahel region.

UNESCO, UNFPA and UN Women under the joint project **Empowering Adolescent Girls and Young Women through Education** benefitted adolescent girls and marginalized young women in and out of school system in Bamako, Segou, Mopti and Timbuktu regions through the funding of KOICA.

Among the tangible achievements in 2018 and 2019 in terms of reproductive health, the joint project **distributed 4,560 contraceptives** to peer educators and nurses.

A total of **137 latrines in schools were rehabilitated** in the region of Bamako, 69 of which were designed specifically for the needs of adolescent girls and young women.

It also enabled **gender-responsive education of 752 members of School Management Committees** in all project regions have completed capacity training on gender issues and committee’s key functions and roles.

Overall the joint project **sensitized around 53,070 beneficiaries** on girls’ access to quality education through the intervention.
With insurrection and counter-insurgency operations displacing millions in the Sahel, in September 2019, UNHCR and the Government of Mali organized a Regional Dialogue for Protection and Solutions in the context of forced displacement. The “Bamako Conclusions” made far-reaching recommendations, which have helped tremendously in strengthening coordination between security and humanitarian actors in view of ensuring humanitarian access, protection, and assistance to affected populations. The implementation of the Bamako Conclusions involves the Governments of Chad, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger as well as UN Agencies, and programmes in Mali.
Resilience

Food Security and Nutrition

As part of the humanitarian Sahel response in the G5 countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) and Senegal, during the lean season, at the end of 2019 WFP has reached 3.1 million people of 3.5 million targeted (89% of the planned figures) with food security and nutrition assistance among which 710,000 beneficiaries received nutrition assistance, including 510,000 children and 200,000 pregnant and lactating women. This includes 286,000 people with preventive assistance and 423,000 with treatments activities.

Support for resilient pastoralism in the G5 Sahel countries and Senegal: FAO, WFP, IOM, UNESCO, and UNV are supporting the G5 Sahel and working with the respective governments to include youth in pastoral value chains and, to improve access to basic social services for pastoralists’ communities. The programme promotes productive and sustainable pastoralism to foster peaceful coexistence among communities while strengthening food and nutritional security.

The programme is now being scaled through the application of best practices to enhance youth integration in the agricultural-based value chains and increase self-employment and education through adaptive training in pastoral and agro-pastoral areas.

For example, in Chad, FAO and WFP action is improving the livelihoods of more than 1,320 pastoralists in the Kanem region through collaboration with smallholder farmers where livestock graze and provide manure for crop production. WFP has introduced market gardening in several rural communities in the border regions with Mali to improve the food security, nutrition and health situation, as well as to raise local incomes through the sale of surplus produce.

“Sustainable pastoralism fosters peaceful coexistence among communities increasing food and nutritional security”

From mid-2018, WFP scaled-up integrated resilience interventions in the G5 Sahel countries and reach 1.3 million people in 1,400 villages with the generous support from Germany, USAID and other donors. The integrated package of resilience activities comprises asset creation and smallholder farmer support, school meals, nutrition interventions, capacity strengthening as well as social protection. Since then, more than 35,000 hectares of degraded land have been rehabilitated, agricultural production has been increased and water management improved.

Moreover, 300,000 children received nutritious school meals across the five countries to boost school attendance and retention. Another 500,000 children and women benefitted from activities to treat and prevent moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and/or were sensitized on nutrition and health. Currently, the integrated package is being reinforced through complementary UNICEF interventions, targeting the same vulnerable communities in Mali, Mauritania and Niger, through an UNICEF integrated resilience programme, investing in education, health, nutrition and social protection.
In the frame of the integrated resilience initiative, FAO, IFAD, WFP, and UNICEF have jointly adopted a community-based approach to work with vulnerable populations and government for transformative impact in Niger. For example, in the integrated resilience site of Wacha (Zinder region), a resilience building package of activities has been developed around the cleaning and rehabilitation of water ponds, production, education, nutrition, and livelihood interventions. In Wacha site only, these activities have directly benefitted 385 vulnerable households (2,680 people) and have indirectly helped to strengthen the resilience of the entire community.

In Burkina Faso and Niger, WFP and UNICEF have been working with local and international NGOs under the USAID-funded Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE) initiative. Under RISE, partners are addressing the underlying causes of chronic vulnerability and working to build resilience in the face of recurrent external shocks. The programme is pursued through concerted, joint action focusing on the same vulnerable communities over several years and has benefitted approximately 400,000 people in 60 communities in Burkina Faso and Niger. In Niger, more than 90,000 hectares of degraded land has been rehabilitated, thus increasing production and access to food to vulnerable communities since 2014.

UNHCR-supported projects in Northern Mali in the same border region with Niger are helping returnees, IDPs, women, and host communities regroup in associations to jointly earn their own income and produce food despite challenges associated with insecurity. Livelihood activities, including support for similar associations, professional training, and cash transfers, are also implemented in Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger which host Malian refugees. These activities are co-financed by the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa of the European Union.

Furthermore, to address conflicts over natural resources along the lines of the G5 Sahel's Priority Investment Programme (PIP), WFP, FAO, and IOM are jointly undertaking operational initiatives related to Resilient Transhumance (Projet d'Appui au Développement du Pastoralisme resilient au Sahel). In partnership with the Regional Herders Network (RBM) and its national members, IOM has established a Transhumance Tracking Tool (TTT) in Burkina Faso, Chad, Central African Republic and Mauritania. Coupled with community mechanisms in strategic and sensitive locations, the information collected through the TTT enables relevant local stakeholders to mobilize ahead of the arrival of herds and identify solutions to alleviate potential conflicts. Partnering with FAO at locations along the borders between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, IOM's early response mechanism is being implemented in collaboration with FAO’s capacity initiative for rehabilitating infrastructure and providing inclusive processes among feuding communities and relevant authorities.

At the institutional level, within the framework of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) among WFP, FAO, and the G5 Sahel Permanent Secretariat to support the G5 Sahel Investment Plan resilience pillar, a roadmap was drafted for 2019. It is currently being implemented with the objective of increasing food security and resilience programmes across the G5 countries. Within the framework of a partnership between the African Union, the G5 Sahel, and the ILO, the latter is supporting the G5 Sahel Secretariat in the promotion of decent work throughout the implementation of the Priority Investment Programme.
Health and Education

The Malian Government through a joint intervention of UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, and UN Women in the Sikasso region, has seen an increase of the delivery rate in health facilities offering emergency obstetric and neonatal care from 22% to 31% (compared with 18% to 20% for the rest of the country).

In the four affected countries of Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria, the UNFPA-led Lake Chad Basin Regional Coordination Platform was put in place in 2019 to foster community resilience and the empowerment of youth and women. The platform has accomplished the following objectives so far:

1. established advocacy forums for traditional, religious, youth, and women leaders for peace, security, and development;
2. increased access to integrated reproductive health services, including family planning, through the strengthening of several health systems in the most affected areas; and
3. actively responding to GBV and sexual exploitation and abuse, addressing traumatic experience of young people and women affected by conflict, and operationalizing a crisis-oriented Demographic Dividend Observatory for LCB countries.

“Safe spaces have been established and the economic capacity of women and youth organizations has increased, mitigating the risk of migration.”

Over the past two years, UNFPA has implemented an inception project at the common border between Chad and Niger to build community resilience around Lake Chad basin through investments in youth and women. This project has strengthened and improved the performance of health centers and referral centers in both countries generating demand for quality sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, including family planning, as well as Gender-based Violence (GBV) services for women and youth. Functional safe spaces have been established and the economic capacity of women and youth organizations has increased mitigating the risk of migration.

Early Childhood Development: UNICEF and UNESCO are collaborating to provide safe, child-friendly spaces and services to allow children who have lost family and friends or displaced by conflict to access education, for a better future. The interventions are helping over 250 children in the border region of Cameroon and Nigeria to overcome conflict induced shocks and related stresses.
Achieving demographic dividend is a ‘win-win’ partnership for the public, private sector and communities. But this will require quality investments in health and education, particularly girls’ education, access to sexual and reproductive health care and by creating jobs for young people.”

Mabingue Ngom
United Nations Fund Population Regional Director for West and Central Africa

Strengthening of social cohesion: UNESCO and UNODC are using an inventive educational approach to empower teachers and learners to examine local contexts, beliefs, values, knowledge, and attitudes to develop spaces for self-reflection, appreciation of diversity, critical thinking, and justice. This programme inculcates in young people the quest to learn to live together, gain the competencies to engage with their communities, foster peace and embrace a culture of civic responsibility with a global view outlook. It targets more than 200,000 young people in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Senegal.

In this regard UNFPA and UNICEF are assisting Burkina Faso and Niger to implement the Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage. The programme has reached 182,000 adolescent girls across the region.
The Sahel Women’s Economic Empowerment Programme: UNFPA, UNICEF, FAO, and WFP are working with the Governments of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal to address inclusive economic transformation through initiatives that are tackling the challenges militating against the full and effective participation of women in the workforce. The key elements of the programme include education and capacity building, skills and entrepreneurship development, prevention of child marriage, promotion of reproductive rights, access to credit, and active participation in the productive economic sectors, especially in those aligned to agricultural value chains.

The Approach to Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS): in Mauritania and Niger, the ILO and UNHCR have developed market-based livelihood options for refugees and host populations to strengthen their resilience. This initiative covers over 150,000 refugees. In Mauritania, 565 young Malian refugees and Mauritians have received occupational training with 25 enterprises being supported. The ILO has several ongoing projects tackling child labor, lack of social protection safeguards and youth unemployment in the Sahel region. ILO is addressing these constraints through enhanced regional cooperation, skills upgrade, knowledge sharing, innovative programmes, and evidence-based labor market policies.

IOM supports youth in Burkina Faso and Niger to advance their entrepreneurial abilities and promotes alternatives to irregular migration. In Niger, the project has created 150 new jobs while in Burkina Faso, more than 50,000 young people were educated on local employment opportunities.

The Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurship Sahel youth programme funded by UNDP received over 81,000 applications from youth in the Sahel. 5,240 have been shortlisted to receive business training with a target of 2,500 reserved to receive financial support for their business start-ups.

The regional joint programme on Strengthening Human Security and Community Resilience in the Sahel led by UNDP in the G5 countries has created 3,500 temporary jobs for youth and equipped more than 4,500 young people with specialized training for entrepreneurial development.

In Mali, UNDP jointly with UN-WOMEN and FAO, with the support of PBF, implemented the project

“We share a common vision on the challenges of the development of our continent, particularly the acceleration of the demographic transition, the greater empowerment of women and the development of human capital to accelerate economic growth and increase the well-being of African populations, particularly in the Sahel region.”

Mahamadou Issoufou
President of Niger
Employment and Youth for Peace. The capacity building activities in conflict prevention and management have benefitted 1,200 young people, with half of them being women. The project also supported the implementation of three community charters, after an inclusive and participatory analysis of local conflicts. Six development committees have been created in the Mopti and Tenenkou regions to implement economic, social and cultural development in the region.

Malian refugee artistes in, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger are being connected to international markets through UNHCR’s Made51 project as a channel of preserving their creative cultural heritage while rebuilding their lives in dignity despite the challenges of exile. Through a partnership with Afrika Tiss, a social enterprise promoting handmade textiles in West Africa, the project has enabled 50 Malian refugee artistes, so far, to enhance their skills in product design and production techniques through fellowships with selected French designers. Beyond the skills craftsmanship, refugees, who are mainly women and youth, have acquired and improved their literacy, numeracy, entrepreneurship, and organizational skills. Contributing to the value chain, these Malian refugee artistes have substantially increased their income owing to supplies demands and commissioning contracts from luxury retailers in the United States, Denmark, Switzerland, Norway, and Japan. Professional marketing materials, direct buyer contacts, and participation in trade shows continues to facilitate these connections. The refugee artistes are also exploring local markets. In Burkina Faso, for example, UNHCR and Afrika Tiss have supported them in opening outlets in the main art galleries in Ouagadougou after mentorship on quality control, pricing, and sales management.

UNDP provided four nursery sites in the Lake Chad Basin with solar pumping systems, leading to the cultivation of 220 hectares and planting of 128,000 trees to mitigate climate change effects.

In addition, 875 young people benefited from income-generating initiative, with 18 micro-projects being financed for producer groups and 39 micro-projects initiated for the benefit of women and young people. Additional support was extended to some 128 young people who benefited from the cash-for-work activities (HIMO) and four women groups received multi-functional platforms assistance. Between 2018 and 2019 some 54 per cent of the 300,000 people who accessed these financial services, were women.
In Burkina Faso, the PBF-funded **Confidence Building Project** between the Administration, Defense and Security Forces (FDS), and communities is being implemented by IOM and UNDP in 11 communities in the Sahel Region and four localities in the Northern Region. The Project responds to the need to bolster confidence among the communities, civil administration and the Defense and Security agencies. The interventions contribute to the improvement of quality services, bring communities and the FDS to work closely and providing an enabling environment to counter terrorism. The project which is earmarked for communities in the grassroots is facilitating continuous dialogue between the administration, security agencies and communities through established local traditional platforms.

To improve civic identity, IOM intervention to date, had resulted in the enrollment of 12,913 in citizens in four localities in Northern zone of the Sahel region, including obtaining their civil status documents. Another 5,000 citizens will receive identity cards without any charges by end of 2020. In addition, 34 public administration facilities are under construction consisting of 15 town halls. Further 15 prefectures, and 4 courthouses have been constructed and equipped with ICT equipment and furniture are earmarked to continue to draw up civil status documents.

**At the applied research level,** WFP has signed agreements with nine universities in five countries of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger, and Senegal to facilitate innovation and knowledge sharing, connecting the academia to WFP and UN resilience projects in the Sahel, and to engage students in finding tangible long lasting solutions through context-specific resilience research in rural communities.

Around 70 graduate students have already been deployed to resilience sites to develop their theses.

Furthermore, WFP has facilitated the signing of a framework agreement for the creation of a Sahelian universities’ network aiming at strengthening academic operational capacities and promoting quality of higher education.

**Promoting Heritage Values:** UNESCO projects, in collaboration with MINUSMA, support the protection of cultural and historic sites in Mali to reconnect with collective memory, heritage, and values, promoting self-esteem through supporting the community-led rehabilitation of mosques and mausoleums and the preservation of ancient manuscripts that were damaged during the armed conflicts. About 20 mosques and mausoleums, which hold cultural significance and value to the life of the affected communities, have benefited from this initiative and contributed to the culture of peace and social cohesion, in Timbuktu.
Prevention of Violent Extremism

In Cameroon, Chad, Mali and Nigeria, with UNDP support, efforts are currently focused on research, community resilience, policy development and implementation incorporating, institutional capacity building through the "whole government" and "whole society" approach. In Mali and Nigeria which are considered as most affected, the strategy is to transcend prevention by addressing violent extremism and reintegration. In Chad, the focus is on preventive activities on the Islands in Lake Chad. While in Cameroon a country-specific version of the groundbreaking Journey to Extremism research was undertaken in 2019 to better understand Cameroon-specific drivers and triggers of extremism. Moving forward, UNDP is broadening its PVE engagement in the Sahel through increased country-specific intervention as well as deepen its regional approach.

A Youth and Stabilization for Peace and Security in the Far North of Cameroon project led by UNFPA and other agencies was put in place in 2019 in Maroua.

In Burkina Faso, advocacy and awareness campaigns on PVE, social cohesion, crisis prevention and peaceful coexistence were carried out and reached more than 35,000 people in the Sahel and the North Central regions. UNDP’s livelihood support activities have resulted in the creation of (i) 955 temporary jobs, out of which 573 positions for women and girls; (ii) 600 permanent jobs in 30 rural municipalities for young boys and girls aged from 18 to 35 years.

In Mali, a UNV-led project “Support to Peace Process in Mali through Youth empowerment” (PARC Jeunesse) which sensitizes Malian youth on prevention of violent extremism, citizenship, civic engagement, human rights and social cohesion was launched with the aim of encouraging young people to be agents of peace in their communities. Among main achievements, the project supported the rehabilitation of the youth center in Gao. 2,500 youth drawn from the regions of Bamako, Gao, Kayes, Mopti and Segou also benefited from capacity building workshops. This project is co-funded by UNV, BMZ and UNDP.

A novel aspect of this UNV project was the inauguration of 13 Peace Labs involving community, religious women and youth leaders in the Macina and Tenenkou localities within the Segou and Mopti regions of central Mali. This groundbreaking initiative constitutes a platform within which community leaders are themselves active actors in conflict prevention and inclusive peacebuilding processes. Myriad successes have been attained through this project. They include the identification of 65 local volunteers engaged in peace-building efforts among their communities. 12 community dialogue forums have been conducted in 13 localities around Segou and Mopti regions, which have bolstered inter-communal relations. A campaign for peace was conducted and messages of sensitization on the peace agreement have been broadcast on four local radios, in three local languages reaching a targeted audience of 26,000 people.

“We are experiencing an asymmetrical war where the enemy sometimes turns out to be our neighbor, living among us. That makes the task of our troops extremely difficult. They are under great psychological and moral pressure. An element of risk remains. But we have to bet on peace – peace and reason.”

Ibrahim Boubacar Keita
President of Mali
With close to two million people in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, and Niger who have been depending on humanitarian assistance for years, UNHCR has entered into a partnership with the World Bank Group (WBG) to assist governments to apply the humanitarian-development-peace approach in fragile and conflict-affected areas. The World Bank’s International Development Association (IDA) which is the largest donor in the Sahel\(^1\), has recently enhanced its focus on addressing the key drivers of fragility, conflict, and forced displacement. The creation in 2016 of a US$2 billion Sub-Window for Host and Refugee Communities represents a major step towards a more systematic humanitarian-development cooperation for medium to long-term interventions to increase refugee inclusion and ease pressure on host countries. To the Sahel this was significant as it was effected during the World Bank’s 18th replenishment with additional support from the UNHCR in the programming of this financing mechanism.

With the recent replenishment of the IDA-19, the project begun to integrate refugees in national development plans, building infrastructure, and strengthening governance plus the rule of law while investing in human capital and enhancing jobs creation. The geographic areas targeted are mainly in the border regions where the spillover effects of the Nigeria and Mali refugees crisis as well as climate change have compounded extreme poverty and fuelled inter-communal violence. In Chad, it also covers areas hosting CAR and Darfur refugees not linked to the Sahel crisis as defined by UNISS.

UNHCR is increasingly investing in partnerships with key bilateral development actors such as AFD, DEVCO, JICA, and BMZ/GIZ, with UN development agencies (ILO and UNDP), and with UN Frameworks notably the UN Common Country Analysis and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. These partnerships are all aligned with the Global Compact for Refugees and the “Protection and Solution Strategy for the Sahel,” through which UNHCR seeks to broaden its alliances and find sustainable alternatives for refugees, IDPs, and stateless people, as well as host communities in the region. This new approach promotes burden and responsibility sharing with the governments of the Sahel affected by the crisis, which needs greater international cooperation to address the needs of forcibly displaced persons.

Other than an influx of refugees, asylum seekers, and IDPs, the Sahel crisis has made statelessness an ever-present risk due to inadequate national civil documentation systems.

UNHCR works with governments to remedy the lack of identity documents that puts refugees and other displaced populations at peril of discrimination and statelessness.

An example is Burkina Faso where, UNHCR is supporting the delivery of 65,000 birth certificates, 25,000 nationality certificates, and 2,000 national ID cards (CNIB) for IDPs and host populations following the recent increase in IDP numbers in the Sahel and central-north regions. In Chad, Mali, and Niger, similar exercises have been taking place in cooperation with IOM and UNICEF.

Following the Secretary-General’s decision to make Burkina Faso one of the few pilots of the New Way of Working country teams and to increase its response to the IDP situation, UNHCR has been leading the establishment of the UN common office in Kaya (Centre-Nord), where nine agencies (UNHCR, UNFPA, FAO, UNICEF, WFP, IOM, UNDP, OCHA, and UNDSS) are sharing a common premises. This initiative is expected to boost UNCT’s response capacity and presence in the country, not only in Kaya but also in Ouahigouya, Fada-Ngourma, Dori, and Bobo-Dioulasso, which have been identified as strategic

\(^1\) OECD, Total Official Aid Flows by Country and Region (ODA+OOF, 2017), available at stats.oecd.org, and internal World Bank estimates.
locations. The response considers the humanitarian-development nexus, inviting development actors to work side by side with humanitarian actors in the selected areas.

The urbanization of refugee settlements in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, and Niger also contributes to the UNISS objectives. The “out-of-camp” policy aims to integrate refugees and host communities for peaceful coexistence while building the resilience of both populations to the environmental and socio-economic shocks experienced in the Sahel. In Niger, UNHCR has been working with municipalities in the Diffa and Tillabery regions to build 8,000 durable houses for refugees, IDPs, and host communities with support from the EU and GIZ. The municipalities have used many plots since the project started in 2016, with close to 1,300 houses being constructed to date. Approximately 3,000 local and displaced people will be trained and employed in the various stages of the project. To benefit the local economy, half of the plots will be sold by the municipalities and the income generated will be reinvested in amenities to augment local social services or used as part of the land for public infrastructure.

In the Diffa region of Niger, which is affected by desertification, around 260,000 vulnerable refugees and their host communities now have access to liquefied natural gas-cookers thanks to a UNHCR initiative involving private sector enterprise. This makes Diffa one of the best-served border areas in the Sahel in terms of access to clean cooking energy, while saving 300 hectares of wooded land and reducing the exposure of women and girls to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) during firewood collection. It also enables girls to spend more time in school rather than on domestic chores. Bordering troubled northeast Nigeria, Diffa is also affected by Boko Haram insurgency, which is responsible for extensive displacement and myriad human rights violations. There are 109,404 IDPs and 120,000 refugees from northeast Nigeria in the region, in addition to nearly 30,000 returnees who were previously refugees in Nigeria. This unexpected influx in additional population has damaged the environment due to overuse of firewood.
Climate Action

In partnering with the private sector to address environmental degradation, UNHCR established a local, autonomous, sustainable gas system supply accessible to communities. UNHCR supports the initial investment for the first 6 kg bottle of gas (costing USD 40, equivalent to 80 per cent of the monthly income of a vulnerable household). In return, the private sector invests in building the required infrastructure. Five liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) stations of 10,000-liter capacity and 30 gas selling and refilling points have been established across the Diffa region, where only one per cent of the population had access to cooking gas before the UNHCR project. Since LPG is cheaper than firewood, families save a combined total of USD 200,000 monthly, for other basic needs. In terms of returns on investment, the cost of the project will be reimbursed after 15 months.

Conservation of the Lake Chad Basin: Together with FAO and the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) the UNESCO-led BIOPAL T project seeks to safeguard the hydrological, biological, and cultural resources of the Lake Chad Basin. The project empowers five basin countries that are the members of LCBC to build their capacity for coordinated trans-boundary management of the Basin. It includes the development of an early flood and drought warning system for climate resilience to protect the livelihoods of the basin’s 40 million inhabitants. UNESCO also works with the AGHRYMET- Comité Permanent Inter-États de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel (CILSS) to develop a water disaster platform (WDP) to enhance the climate resilience of 11 countries through cooperation with the International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management (ICARM).

“An early flood and drought warning system for climate resilience to protect the livelihoods of the basin’s 40 million inhabitants is being developed.”

In addition, UNDP and UNICEF are engaged in a joint pilot project to provide sustainable energy solutions for social services, as well as to spur “green employment” by enabling small-scale entrepreneurs to extract water from boreholes, mitigating the impact of water scarcity. The joint effort, which will be aligned with the ongoing large-scale stabilization project implemented by the UNDP, will raise additional resources for the USD 50 million meant for implementation.

In 2018, UNDP support in Mali enabled 329,299 people, including 141,355 women, to adopt climate-resilient subsistence practices. Of these, 273,758 vulnerable beneficiaries, 109,017 of whom 83 per cent were women engaged in resilient activities through better planning of agricultural activities, procurement of equipment, access and better management of weather information for agricultural purposes.

UNDP provision of water pans and irrigation services promoted 243 hectares of arable land, secured over 25,000 livestock and related households and provided 62.5 tons of cereals stock to 3 new grain banks in Mali to enable food security in targeted regions. In the same direction, through its Scale-up resilience programme, in the G5 Sahel countries, WFP allowed participants to restore and improve some 35,000 hectares of lands with FFA (Food for Assets) activities.

The changing dynamics in the Sahel require an accelerated response through a combination of humanitarian, development, and crisis prevention actions. However, this demands additional resources.
Changing development contexts

The Sahel region faces heightened security challenges. Increasing cases of violence and rapid rise of extremism in the region constitutes a major threat to ongoing efforts to implement development activities, especially in terms of access. As such, humanitarian actions are assuming prominence as a strategic focus for interventions. For example, the violence against security forces and civilian populations in the Liptako-Gourma region has intensified to alarming proportions, resulting in an urgent need for humanitarian actions. Displacements have reached unprecedented levels. There are approximately 3.1 million IDPs, and these numbers are set to increase exponentially in the next few months in Central Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin regions.

There is a strong need to build strategic partnerships with relevant institutional and non-institutional actors, including international and regional entities on the ground.

A well-integrated coordination framework

The 2017 Mapping of UN and non-UN initiatives under the UNISS identified around 19 strategies and strategic frameworks in the Sahel. Many studies, including those conducted by the Institute for Security Study (ISS Policy Brief No. 76, March 2015), highlighted the similarities among the various initiatives. Indeed, most were put in place in the wake of the crises in Libya and Mali, and are articulated around key priority objectives to promote peace, stability, governance, security, and resilience, with a focus on the G5 Sahel region and neighbouring countries in the Lake Chad Basin and West Africa.

“The changing dynamics in the Sahel require an accelerated response through a combination of humanitarian, development, and crisis prevention actions.”

The analysis also recognized the strong need to build strategic partnerships with relevant institutional and non-institutional actors, including international and
regional entities on the ground. Such an orientation should be operationalized through an approach based on better planning, efficiency, and capitalization of key achievements for greater impact. To that effect, it is imperative to build an inclusive and well-integrated coordination mechanism for all actors, including a knowledge management platform, and the strengthening of the G5 Ministerial Coordination Platform of Sahel Strategy (MCP/Sahel).

Resource mobilization challenges

The changing dynamics in the Sahel require an accelerated response through a combination of humanitarian, development, and crisis prevention actions. However, this demands additional resources. So far, only 46 per cent of this year’s humanitarian appeal for the Sahel (a total of 2.5 billion dollars) has been funded. This poses critical challenges to the responses in Burkina Faso and in the Lake Chad Basin, where humanitarian access and protection are at risk. A number of ongoing developments programmes strive to upscale these interventions, especially in the G5 countries, for which a significant funding gap exists. See Table 1 below.

### Table 1. Compiled list of designed regional programmes currently on stream to upscale UNISS implementation through a nexus fashion across the three pillars in the G5 Sahel countries (2019-2023)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNISS Pillar</th>
<th>No. of Projects</th>
<th>Total Budget ($)</th>
<th>Total Mobilized ($)</th>
<th>Budget Gap ($)</th>
<th>Implementing Agencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>379mln</td>
<td>133mln</td>
<td>246mln</td>
<td>UNDP, UNCDF, UVN UNICEF, UNWOMEN UMOCT, UNREC, UNICEF, UNHCR, OHCHR, ILO, UNESCO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>140mln</td>
<td>73mln</td>
<td>67mln</td>
<td>UNODC, IOM, CTD, UNIDO, UNICRI, UNDP, OHCHR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.5bln</td>
<td>3.954bln</td>
<td>1.546bln</td>
<td>UNICEF, WFP, ILO, FAO, UNFPA, UN WOMEN, UNIDO, UNESCO, UNHCR, OCHA, UNDP, OHCHR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** 1. This does not include country-level initiatives. 2. It does not include activities related to OCHA (linked to the humanitarian response plan for the Sahel).
The R-UNSDG is poised to build on the recent capacity reinforcement for UNISS through the establishment of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) and the UNOWAS review to accelerate the implementation of the UNISS. This initiative has an overarching focus on results. Consequently, the R-UNSDG has immediately put in place the following collective actions for concurrent implementation.

### Operationalization of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU)

The residual capacity from the Office of the Special Adviser for the Sahel (OSAS) has been phased into the ISU to kickstart its immediate establishment and operationalization. It is leading programme coordination efforts under the oversight of the R-UNSDG chair and DSRSG UNOWAS, and in close collaboration with the pillar working groups, RCs, and UNCTs. Also, an agreement has been finalized with Sweden to fund the post of the team leader at the D1 level and the programme coordinator role at the P5 level. In addition, R-UNSDG will resource the ISU with staff secondments as well as through contribution towards operational budgets for acquiring the requisite additional capacities for coordination, private sector engagement, strategic communication, innovation and data hubs to enhance results based programmes design and implementation. Moreover, UNV is working with the ISU to fund two positions for programme implementation support.

### Revitalization of the pillar working groups

The pillar working groups are reassessing their functions to ensure they are all fit-for-purpose, efficient and effective. This is being done through the review of their Terms of reference (ToRs), results deliveries and positioning for accelerating the implementation of ongoing programmes and designing new ones in conformity with the current dynamics and the urgent needs of the Sahel.

A draft revised ToRs has been produced through the leadership of the ISU and joint efforts of the respective pillars. A pillar retreat, organized by the ISU, is planned for 2020 to discuss and approve the ToRs, as well as establish an operational strategic action plan for accelerating and upscaling the UNISS/UNSP programme implementation, including the linkage of bankable projects to actions on the ground, resource mobilization, communication strategy, and the design of new programmes.

### Bankable projects

The R-UNSDG has noted that of the four bankable programmes being offered as enablers of transformational change in the Sahel region—governance, renewable energy, resilience, and climate-resilient agriculture—the climate-resilient agriculture programme is the only one that is fully developed and actualized. The R-UNSDG is therefore prioritizing the other three for their full development and immediate implementation.

### Development of a resource mobilization strategy

It is expected that the bankable programmes will be backed by a robust partnership and resource mobilization strategy. R-UNSDG is initializing the urgency for the development of a comprehensive, innovative, and resilient resource mobilization strategy to support the full implementation of the UNISS/UNSP priorities. The resource mobilization and partnership strategy will be linked to the Sahel
Window of the SDG Fund and would also align with the DSG efforts for resource mobilization for UNISS/UNSP programmes. For coordination effectiveness, the strategy will build upon and leverage ongoing investments from different funding sources already mobilized for the Sahel, including PBF, Human Security Trust Fund, CERF Humanitarian Funds, the Sahel Alliance, AFPs core, and non-core resources.

**Development of a communication strategy**
Linked to the resource mobilization and partnership strategy is a communication strategy to publicize UNISS programme results and achievements. The communication strategy will target a wide range of appropriate media outlets and audiences, including major government and donor partners and institutions, civil society, foundations, IFIs, and the private sector. Meanwhile, preceding the communication strategy, the R-UNSDG, with contributions from UNDP, is producing a pictorial coffee-table book documenting the achievements by the UNDG on the Sahel. These images which will serve as archival historical footage will also be used to mount-up a series of exhibitions on the Sahel UNISS/UNSP programmes in 2020. The ToRs for the recruitment of the photo journalist have been developed by the ISU and approved by the R-UNSDG. UNDP has conducted the procurement process.

**Development of Results-Based Management/Data and Information Management System**
A robust RBM/data and information management system will be developed to accompany ongoing programme implementation, new programme design, communicating results, advocacy, visibility, reach and resource mobilization. This is a key priority for the R-UNSDG.

**Timelines for the Implementation of Actions**
Given the urgent need to realize results, all of the actions outlined in this report are envisaged to take place concurrently with the goal of delivering on all plans, noting the sense of urgency in conformity with the decade of action for the SDGs.

“We are entering into the Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals... The investment requirements are vast.”

*Amina J. Mohammed*
United Nations Deputy Secretary-General

Cover photo: © UNFPA/Olivier Girard – Children in School, Dioïla Village, SWEDD Mali
Back cover photo: © UNESCO/H.Huot Machand
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Editorial Team
Publisher
Mabingue Ngom (R-UNSDG Chair a.i)

Editorial Oversight
Ishmael Dodoo
(UNISS/ Implementation Support Unit)

Editor
Céline-Andrée Adotevi

Editorial Consultants
Wanjohi Kabukuru,
Marieme Sy

Design
Mary Marques

UNISS Pillar Groups Coordinators
Hawa Aw, Lars Bernd, Rama Leclerc,
Alexia Taveau