
Breaking the Vicious Circle of Conflict: Which Future for G5 Sahel?
[PTP.2017.01C]

Deadline: 20 Oct 2017

Type:	Side Event
Location:	Palais des Nations, Room IX (Geneva), from 11.00 - 12.30h, Switzerland
Date:	20 Oct 2017
Duration:	1 Days
Programme Area:	Special event, , Peace Security and Diplomacy, , Peacemaking and Conflict Prevention, , Peacekeeping
Website:	http://www.unitar.org/ptp/panel-discussion
Price:	\$0.00
Event Focal Point Email:	ptp@unitar.org

BACKGROUND

In the 1950 and 1960s, the international community welcomed an unprecedented number of newly independent African states, which, following the years of hardship and suppression, were making their first steps towards democratic stability and improved quality of life. The road to peace, however, very soon turned out to be rather slippery and winding. Freedom from fear and oppression

in several countries was quickly undermined, when autocratic regimes and insurgent extremist forces began to compromise both local and international efforts to support and accelerate peaceful development. Despite these challenges, numerous African states and their regional communities have begun to implement regular free elections within peaceful political climates.

Several states continue to struggle with instability and the conflicts that arise as a result. Evidence of this can be seen in the Sahel region, which remains alarmingly unstable. Today, the safety and security of thousands of people are still in jeopardy. Various sub- and inter-state terrorist groups, such as Al-Mourabitoun, Al Qaeda, ISIS, and Boko Haram, continue to commit inhumane crimes, forcing countless people to flee from the terror. These acts increasingly sabotage the peaceful future of the region and contribute to a wide-reaching migration crisis.

In 2014, five regional Sahel powers including Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger decided to join forces in a political alliance to better complement African Union (AU) and international peacekeeping and counterterrorism efforts. This coordinated response was calibrated specifically for the security and development needs of the Sahel region. With the commitment of restoring trans-border peace and ensuring the consistent social and economic development of the Sahel zone, the G5 Sahel countries addressed the UN Security Council to request more military resources be sent to the most troubled areas, in the form of a special counterterrorism taskforce. The Council agreed to the deployment of the Force Conjointe du G5 Sahel (FC-G5S) specifically to address the threat of terrorism and organized crime in the region.

Since its creation, the initiative has been receiving extensive financial and military international support, primarily from the United Nations, the European Union and European countries independently. In July 2017, French President Emmanuel Macron attended a regular G5 Sahel Summit in Bamako, Mali. Later the same month, at the 19th meeting of the Franco-German Council of Ministers, the so-called “Alliance for the Sahel” formed an important part of the discussion between Chancellor Merkel and President Macron, who stressed that the prosperity of both – African and European – continents is intertwined and the insidious extremist threat is shared. France has thus called on Germany and other European countries to intensify military and development aid for the region.

Following a more holistic and careful approach, development of security, social and economic projects must complement each other in order to break the vicious circle of violent conflict and instability, in which the Sahel region remains

trapped. Diving deeper into the conflict fabric and healing its structural causes could help end this cycle, essentially freeing populations, already exhausted by the ongoing crisis. The G5 Sahel, together with the UN Security Council, have highlighted the importance of the FC-G5S along with strengthening the forces of MINUSMA and the French “Operation Barkhane” for regional stability. The goal of these forces is to create conditions which would enable the realization of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. Protection of civilians, respect for gender equality, human rights and humanitarian law shall remain the fundamental guiding principles.

In the light of this, the panel discussion held on the side of the 9th Session of the UNITAR Peacekeeping Training Programme Advisory Board Meeting will revolve around strategic solutions that will build the sustainable and direct road to peace for the Sahel countries. Leading experts and international stakeholders will exchange ideas on the measures and tools that will be necessary to improve both the security and the prosperity for people in the Sahel region; on how further partnerships should be structured to guarantee the availability and efficiency of these tools; and on the nature of support needed to enable the G5 Sahel to attain its objectives of regional security and sustainable development.

EVENT OBJECTIVES

UNITAR’s Peacekeeping Training Programme is committed to building the capacity of governments with strategic solutions that will lead to a sustainable and direct road to peace for the Sahel countries. Leading experts and international stakeholders will exchange ideas on the measures and tools that will be necessary to improve both the security and prosperity for people in the Sahel region; on how further partnerships should be structured to guarantee the availability and efficiency of these tools; and on the nature of support needed to enable the G5 Sahel to attain its objectives of regional security and sustainable development.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

Panellists:

- **Mr. Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah**, former Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa, expert on the Sahel region

- **Brigadier-General Moussa Sinko Coulibaly**, Director General of the Ecole de Maintien de la Paix Alioune Blondin BEYE (EMPABB), in Bamako (Mali)
- **Ms. Coumba Fall Venn**, Director of the Centre PanAfricain pour le Genre, la Paix et le Développement Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), Dakar, Sénégal
- **Ms. Katja Kruse**, Country Expert on Western Africa, Ministry of Defence of Germany

TARGETED AUDIENCE

Open to the public.