



**MESSAGE OF UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL COORDINATOR FOR DEVELOPMENT
IN THE SAHEL, USG ABDOULAYE MAR DIEYE, AT THE LAUNCH OF THE
SECOND EDITION OF THE VOICES OF THE SAHEL: CONVERSATIONS, VISIONS
AND SOLUTIONS**

Dakar, 30 September 2024.

Dear Youth and Women of the Sahel, Colleagues, and Partners,

*Let me start by welcoming you to the second edition of **our regional Consultation; the Voices from the Sahel**, a platform where youths and women of the Sahel and beyond, and the United Nations, engage directly on key topics that accelerate durable progress of the region.*

*Our region – the Sahel, beyond the challenges we see and hear, is not without its unmeasurable potential. Of, course, **the opportunities for development, peace, stability and progress in this region supersede the current challenges confronting it.** As I recalled to you in my opening message in 2021, at our first consultation, most of the challenges the Sahel is facing are more, man-made than natural, which makes the challenges solvable than perennial.*

*The **United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel** and the **United Nations Support Plan** fully recognize women and youth of the Sahel as key players in our implementation process. This means, our reflections on how to accompany the States and people must always ensure your inclusion and active participation, so that collectively, we can engage in frank, durable and transformative solutions to achieve stable development, peace and prosperity.*

***Beyond every international or regional support actions, the Sahel's most precious resource to accompany its sustainable development efforts is its Youth and should be provided all the necessary support to reach their full potential.** It is only when that happens, that the region can truly benefit from the dividends of its youthfulness.*

*Efforts such as the present consultation, **#YouthconneckSahel**, demonstrate our readiness and availability of not leaving the Sahel behind which goes to the heart of changing the negative narrative and demonstrate that the Sahel has be necessary asset for growth and peace. These are demonstrations that as a global public good, we are all Sahel – and hence the **#IAMSahel** campaign recently launched by UNDP. **A change in the narrative is a call for us all to reflect on positive solutions for a #ThrivingSahel.** I am also happy to share with you an Editorial by Ibrahim Thiaw and myself, on the Change of Narrative on the Sahel. **(Please find attached).***

*Like the first one, **this conversation is about solutions and forward-thinking.** It is for us to once again explore these four (4) carefully thought-out themes and provide concrete suggestions and recommendations which together, with the United Nations, and other stakeholders including friends of the Sahel with you the young people and young women at the centre, we can accelerate our support actions and accelerate development actions.*

On this note, it is my great pleasure to officially launch the second edition of our Sahel consultation – The Voices from the Sahel: Conversations, Visions, and Solutions and invite you engage actively the moderators of each week and fellow participants, by reflecting on the guiding questions that will be shared with you each week along the 04 thematic areas.

*Together with our esteemed moderators - **Regional Directors** of 09 UN agencies, funds and programmes, feel free to share your thoughts in any language of your choice—**French** or **English**. This platform will automatically translate your responses, and you can adjust the language settings by using the options at the top right corner of the page.*

I will actively participate in these discussions by responding to your views, comments, and perspectives, as well as addressing any specific questions you may have.

***PS:** Also take some time to read the report of the first edition [\(here\)](#)*

I look forward to your valuable insights.

Thank you!

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