



**HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE BETWEEN MEMBER STATES AND TECHNICAL  
AND FINANCIAL PARTNERS ON THE MOBILIZATION OF FINANCING FOR  
THE GREAT GREEN WALL INITIATIVE**

**held via Zoom**

**26 October 2021, 01.00pm (GMT)**

**Present:**

- Meriem Bekaye - Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of Mauritania, President of the Council of Ministers
- Representative of country delegations: Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria,
- Ibrahim Thiaw – UNCCD Executive Secretary
- Abdoulaye Dia – PAGGW Executive Secretary
- Representatives of United Nations agencies and Intergovernmental Organisations: UNDP, UNEP, UNISS, World Bank, AfDB, AUC, FAO, IFAD, EC, EIB, AFD, GEF, GCF, PAAGGW, OPS.

**I. Opening Ceremony : High Level Political Advocacy**

**Ms. Meriem Bekaye - Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of Mauritania, President of the Council of Ministers:**

Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Ms. Meriem Bekaye, welcomed and thanked all the participants for their availability and participation in this high-level dialogue on the Great Green Wall (GGW).

Ms. Bekaye recalled the key role that the GGW initiative plays in the achievement of the SDGs at the national, regional and international levels. As the world still faces many and various challenges, she further urged all stakeholders to take immediate action to mobilize sufficient resources to improve ecosystem and rural communities resilience.

Ms. Bekaye stressed the need for a common understanding on the development of GGW projects that take into account the respective countries priorities. There is also a need to build the capacities of the Pan African Agency for the Great Green Wall (PAAGGW) and national structures in terms of the elaboration, implementation and monitoring of new projects.

Ms. Bekaye finally called for more concrete actions on the ground to improve the living conditions of vulnerable communities.

**France – Mr. Phillipe Lacoste: representative of the "One Planet Summit"**

Mr. Lacoste, at the outset, stressed the GGW initiative as key for the future development of the Sahel region. He recalled the willingness of France to support politically,



technically and financially the implementation of the GGW initiative. The accelerator was in that respect initiated at the One Planet Summit in January 2021 to boost implementation of projects on the ground.

Mr. Lacoste made 3 main proposals to efficiently achieve the initiative goals:

- (1) to have a common understanding of a “GGW type-project” taking into account geographical factors and stakeholders at the national level;
- (2) to setup an efficient monitoring system of the projects;
- (3) to strengthen country-level institutions.

Mr. Lacoste concluded by recommending:

- a better coordination among country-level institutions;
- sharing good practices in project implementation;
- an efficient project monitoring system;
- a commitment by all ministries (Finance, Agriculture, Environment) in the implementation of GGW Projects.

## **II. Framing of the State/Partner Dialogue on financing the GGW**

### **2.1 Ambition 2030 GGW: 2021-2030 Decennial Priority Investment Plan**

#### **Prof. Abdoulaye Dia - Executive Secretary- PAGGW:**

The PAGGW Executive Secretary Prof. Dia underlined the objective of the GGWI is the security and resilient development of local communities. The initiative also aims at the resilience of Sahelian ecosystems.

In order to achieve the goals of the initiative, we should focus also on an effective coordination among all the stakeholders through permanent dialogue; and consolidating the Decennial Priority Investment Plan adopted by countries; and finally, ensuring that the funding announced is effectively and efficiently mobilized and used.

#### **UNCCD Executive Secretary - Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw:**

Mr. Thiaw underlined the crucial importance of the GGWI as it provides concrete solutions to the multiple crisis in the Sahel. In a world struggling to work out what “build back better” or climate resilience or sustainable development really looks like, the GGW makes tangible and practical sense.

Mr. Thiaw further stressed the need to have permanent dialogue and consultations among all the stakeholders so as to agree on how we move together, effectively, farther and faster. The partners should advise on how to access and deploy the pledges – to effectively get



it done. By bringing together Honorable Environment with Economy and Planning Ministers, there is a hope to sweep away bottlenecks to action at national level and use an “all of government” approach to getting it done – faster and with more direct benefits to the people of the Region.

On the funding, The Executive Secretary of UNCCD also recalled that from the US\$ 14 billion pledged at the One Planet Summit in January of this year, it has now reached 19 billion in pledges. Out of these, 48% is already programmed; and more funding is expected.

Mr. Thiaw further mentioned that the Accelerator team has also been working with the GGW national and regional teams, as well as with all the Technical and Financial Partners on a harmonized results framework. This is going to help monitor and promote investments towards the agreed five pillars at OPS:

- (1) Investment in small and medium-sized farms and strengthening of value chains, local markets, organization of exports;
- (2) Land restoration and sustainable management of ecosystems;
- (3) Climate resilient infrastructures and access to renewable energy;
- (4) Favorable economic and institutional framework for effective governance, sustainability, stability and security;
- (5) Capacity building.

### **III. Dialogue between Member States and Technical and Financial Partners**

#### **Burkina Faso – His Excellency Mr. Siméon Sawadogo – Minister of Environment, Green Economy and Climate Change:**

Mr. Sawadogo thanked all the participants that attended this high-level exchange and stressed the importance of the GGWI as it offers an innovative approach and projects to improve the living conditions of our communities. He further added that the initiative is a strong tool on which we should be able to base the development of the entire region.

Mr. Sawadogo called all stakeholders to act urgently as vulnerable populations on the ground are waiting for our actions. To achieve our goals, we will also need a better coordination among institutions. This will help partners to coordinate actions and support countries that have multiple, specific priorities.

Mr. Sawadogo finally asked for more commitment via the GGW accelerator, as this will help countries to have concrete results and improve the lives of communities.

#### **Mali – His Excellency Mr. Modibo Kone – Minister of Environment, Sanitation and Sustainable Development**



Mr. Kone emphasized the importance of having a bankable projects pipeline ready to finance, as well as a coordinated strategy and approach to implementation led by teams of experts, with the ability to implement proven approaches grounding the initiative in reality. Mr. Kone stressed that this will require efforts not only from the PAGGW but especially from states and integrating the GGW initiative in every country's National Strategies and plans of action.

**Mauritania – His Excellency Mr. Ousmane Kane – Minister of Economic Affairs, Mauritania**

Mr. Kane stressed the importance of different sectors within one country communicating with one another as there are often siloed discussions excluding finance and economy ministers, when they have relevant contributions to the process in terms of planning and allocations that can surely influence outcomes for the better.

**AfDB - Vice President Power, Energy, Climate and Green Growth – Mr. Kevin Karuiki**

The vice president, speaking on behalf of the President of the Bank, has reiterated the commitment of the bank by pledging 6.5 billion USD to be fast-tracked by 2025 in the aim of saving lives, creating green jobs, reducing poverty, restoring, hope and rehabilitating the fragile landscapes across the Sahel. The vice president also proceeded to highlight the importance of making power accessible to the entire Sahel, in order for populations to have alternatives to traditional sources of fuel. Contributing to the GGW will support existing flagships aiming to build the largest solar Zone in the world within the Sahel, providing electricity for about two hundred, fifty million people and helping protect our critical ecosystems in this regard. The vice president thanked and praised partners such as GCF for contributing towards these objectives and stressed the importance of strengthening synergies, scaling up action and supporting a Global Diversity Framework for a green and prosperous Sahel, as a land of opportunity.

**FAO – Deputy Director General – Ms. Maria-Helena Semedo**

The Deputy Director General confirmed FAO's commitment to the GGW and the accelerator, FAO having been a key leading technical partner since the launch and adoption of the Initiative in 2007 by the African Union. She highlighted the need for increased speed and scale of efforts to be transformative with governments in the lead with all partners and stakeholders, through their national agencies and reinforcing the leadership of the PAGGW to coordinate the efforts of the GGW. The Deputy Director General stressed that FAO's technical support and commitment will continue and be further scaled-up across different fields and stages: planning, operational implementation, development of technical, functional and institutional capacities at the country and regional level and monitoring progress and impact. Technical solutions and results are available on the ground in each of the 11 countries. FAO uses digital technology in training and supporting countries and regional partners' experts to collect and analyse data on environment, agriculture and land use. This is very key and useful



in comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems of the GGW. FAO is committed to contributing to the ongoing coordination efforts that need to be enhanced across sectors, actors and partners. These efforts should be led and driven at country level (by the national GGW agencies), at regional level by the PAGGW and at UN level through the UN System action plan coordinated by UNCCD, FAO and UNEP and the championship of the UN Envoy for the Sahel.

### **GEF – Senior Environmental Specialist - Mr. Ibrahima Sow**

Ibrahima Sow, on behalf of the President of GEF, reminded participants about the involvement of the GEF in the GGW initiative from the beginning with 800 million USD contributed and 6 billion USD co-financed via traditional partners. GEF is exploring putting in place a coordination mechanism including UNCCD, UNEP, IFAD, GCF serving as a platform to exchange and build synergistic action. Mr. Sow further expressed the importance of echoing such coordination mechanisms at the national levels, while also involving Civil Society organizations and the private sector. The involvement of youth and women remains a crucial approach to the Great Green Wall.

### **GCF – Director, Division of Mitigation and Adaptation – Mr. Jerry Velasquez**

Mr. Velasquez also underlined that The Green Climate Fund is strategically placed to support countries in the Sahel in meeting the objectives of the Paris Agreement and at the same time the Great Green Wall Initiative. GCF is already working on a multi country, multi partner program for the Great Green Wall covering sub projects on renewable energy, forest and land use, agriculture and food security and ecosystems and ecosystem services.

On the funding, Mr. Velasquez recalled that the GCF has approved 29 public and private sector projects totaling more than USD 1 billion of GCF resources since 2019 in the region. GCF approved USD 82.8 million for the IFAD Sahel project which aims to building the resilience of smallholder farmers to climate change impacts in 7 Sahelian countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal) with IFAD. This will benefit over five million beneficiaries, including 817,000 directly and reduced emissions of 21,446,449 tons CO<sub>2</sub>e power project lifetime. The GCF has also recently approved USD 35 million for the West African Development Bank project in Niger that promotes climate smart agricultural practices. As previously noted by AfDB, GCF also recently approved USD 150 million for Desert to Power program, covering multiple countries, which we think could place the Sahel as on the map as regional energy hub.

### **AFD – Deputy Director General – Mr. Bertrand Walckenaer**

Mr. Walckenaer at the outset informed that, in January 2021, AFD committed EUR 600 million to the GGWI. On the policy framework; Mr. Walckenaer recalled the need to have national priorities at the country level involving multisectoral actors. This dialogue helps us to



understand the priority of the countries in the coming one, two, or even ten years; in order to better support them.

Mr. Walckenaer further stressed that we must go to the field, meet the populations, with a focus on women and youth, who must be at the heart of the projects. This must be done from the outset of the projects and wanted to thank UNCCD secretariat for the presentation of the indicators.

Mr. Walckenaer concluded on the procedures, by underlining that AFD is working with many partners and GGW countries that are present here. AFD also has fruitful dialogues with the ministers of finance, and this is always done with the ministries in charge of agricultural policy, environment. This high-level dialogue must be structured and supported by existing mechanisms to accelerate the impact. This will allow AFD to finance projects with added value proposed by the countries.

### **IFAD – Associate Vice-President - Ms. Jo Puri**

Presently, IFAD's operations are reaching over 100 million people. Every year, IFAD helps 20 million poor rural people increase their incomes by at least 20 per cent by increasing their productivity, food security and nutrition as well as their resilience to climate change.

In IFAD's history, the Sahel has always been the most important region. As of today, IFAD has an investment portfolio in the 11 countries of the Great Green Wall amounting to 2.8 billion USD - of which 1.3 billion is IFAD investment. About half a billion (US\$470million) of these investments are contributing to the objectives of the GGW Initiative. In addition to IFAD's own funding, IFAD is mobilizing additional climate resources from Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility and Adaptation Fund to further support GGW countries implementing their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plan (NAPs).

Earlier this year, the GCF Board approved a \$143million IFAD Africa Integrated Climate Risk Management Programme (\$82million grant from GCF) which will benefit Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal. The programme will build, strengthen, and scale up the resilience and adaptive capacities of smallholder farmers and rural communities of seven least developed countries (LDCs) in this region. It will provide capacity building and institutional development on integrated climate risks management. This includes reducing obstacles to access agricultural insurance for governments and smallholder farmers to enhance resilience building and strengthening climate weather information services.

IFAD is also working on the "Inclusive Green Financing for Climate Resilient and Low Emission Smallholder Agriculture" (IGREENFIN ) program. The main objective of IGREENFIN is to build and scale up the resilience and adaptive capacity of farmers' organizations, cooperatives and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the GGW countries by removing key barriers to farmers' access financial and non-financial services that support the adoption of best climate change adaptation and mitigation practices and solutions.





A first project was already approved for Niger (US\$10million from GCF). A new phase covering Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal (plus Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, non GGW countries) is under review by the GCF, with a total budget of US\$228million, including US\$138million from GCF = \$90m loans + \$48m grants).

The 7 other GGW countries (Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Nigeria and Sudan) are included in the next phase of the program which will be submitted to GCF for review by the end of 2021 (approx. total budget US\$472 million, including USD 236 million from GCF = US\$ 202 of loans; US\$ 34 of grants).

In addition to the financial support it provides to GGW countries, IFAD also supports the GGW in other ways:

- IFAD is developing jointly with the GCF an “umbrella program” (up) which ambition is to increase the overall impact of the GCF on the GGW. This is a response to the invitation of the GGW Minister during the Virtual Event of November 2020. The elaboration of this UP went through a consultative process with all the GGW countries and focal point, the GGW Agency, GCF National Designated Agencies, GEF focal point and the GCF Accredited Entities. This Umbrella Program (UP) is presently under review by the GCF;
- This UP is being developed in close collaboration with the Accelerator led by the UNCCD and the GGW Agency, to ensure alignment, consistency and avoid fragmentation of support, which has been a barrier to the implementation of the GGW so far;
- Being an International Financial Institution (IFI) and a UN agency, IFAD is ideally placed to facilitate discussions at country level between Ministries of Environment, Finance and Agriculture, when discussing country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) and future IFAD program, and ensure they will contribute to the objective of the GGW;
- IFAD is increasing its participation to the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) partnership and the UN support to National Action Plans (NAPs), which are logical entry points at country level to elevate the visibility of the GGW Initiative.

Ms. Puri concluded by welcoming the Result Management Framework. IFAD congratulates UNCCD for their lead on this and we should recognize the administrative context is challenging for setting up a system at Ministry of Environment level. There is no limitation on the type of funding available for the GGW at IFAD – we provide all kind of funding and already work with private sector.

**World Bank - Regional Director for Sustainable Development for Africa- Mr. Simeon Ehui**

Mr. Ehui welcomed the presence of the Minister of Economic Affairs of Mauritania to both this high-level dialogue and in the G5 Sahel meeting where many issues have been discussed, including the finance of the GGWI.



Mr. Ehui also thanked the United Nations for its efforts to move forward, and the African Union for its leadership in a regional approach, and finally France for its decision to make the One Planet Summit a meaningful way to federate the contributions of technical and financial partners.

Mr. Ehui also informed that in January 2021, David Malpass announced US\$5.6 billion in funding for 11 countries. Of this US\$5.6 billion, US\$4.1 billion is available, and 20% are already disbursed. The World Bank has been involved in the GGW since the beginning through the Sahel and West African Program (SAWAP) program where nearly US\$ 3 billion has been invested between 2012 and 2020 - 19 million people have benefited from these investments. World Bank is currently setting up a dialogue with the countries to see how climate impacts the economies, especially at the level of the 11 GGW countries. World Bank is willing to open the dialogue with countries to continue the work.

#### **UNDP - Administrator – Mr. Achim Steiner**

Mr. Steiner reiterated UNDP's continued and strong commitment to the GGW. As you all know, UNDP's strength is in supporting countries in the design and implementation of national programmes that will allow for a rapid and scaled up roll out of activities of the GGW. UNDP longstanding national presence and ongoing activities in virtually all of the GGW countries - many of which intersect with key priority areas of the GGW Accelerator and the 5 programmatic pillars - as well as being an integral part of the UNISS of the UN Development System's engagement in the region.

#### **European Investment Bank – Head of Division - Mr. Diederick Zambon**

Mr. Zambon also welcomed the participants by reaffirming the EIB's commitment to the GGWI. The EIB has always been committed to the most fragile countries. Today the challenge of climate change is devastating for the populations. This is why the bank has decided to dedicate all its future investments to the climate cause and to be a partner in supporting the GGW initiative.

Mr. Zambon also informed that the bank has committed 1 billion euro for the next 5 years. Thus, the funds from which the 11 countries will benefit will continue to support projects with a strong climate component in line with the Paris agreement. In addition, EIB wants to direct these funds to programs that have a greater impact on environmental conservation and in favor of the populations. Desertification is an important issue, we can not only preserve forests or protected areas, we must also support rural populations to have access to water and energy. We need to facilitate the mobility of people, support the private sector, young men and women in the region to develop a socio-economic system that goes hand in hand with environmental conservation.





Mr. Zambon added that the EIB is at the disposal of countries, financial institutions, and all stakeholders. Furthermore, EIB is also glad to see that their commitments are in line with the countries' priorities. In addition to the commitment of financial and technical partners, it is important to coordinate actions.

Mr. Zambon thanked UNCCD for its efforts to harmonize and ensure dialogue between all the actors, the proper allocation of funding and the proper measurement of impact.

The EIB is fully involved in this coordination process and Mr. Zambon concluded by reiterating the commitment of the bank and its teams to move further in the process.

### **European Union - Director General of International Partnerships - Mr. Koen Doens**

Mr. Doens commended the African ownership, the PAGGW, UNCCD – the global and regional efforts - and efforts carried out by the 11 countries to make the GGW possible, adding that there is a window of opportunity to be seized.

Mr. Doens reiterated the EU's commitment to contributing 700 million euros yearly, through the Global Europe financial tool. He described that a successful project elaboration and implementation process must begin with a needs assessment determined in a collective manner at the national and local levels, implemented in line with the GGW accelerator and complemented by use of the Results Based Framework. He stressed the need to move faster and concluded that the "Priority Investment Plan" proposed by the PAGGW and communicate need further refining.

### **UNEP - UN Assistant Secretary-General and Head of UNEP, New York Office- Ms. Ligia Noronha**

UNEP has reaffirmed its engagement in supporting the GGW with heightened support towards ecosystem resilience, creation of green employment opportunities, and building community resilience. Despite UNEP not having staff in every country, it will assemble teams to provide regional and national support through the 5S approach (sort, set in order, shine, standardize, sustain).

### **UNISS – UN Special Coordinator of the Secretary-General for development in the Sahel - Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye,**

Mr. Dieye pointed at the need for the GGW to be better advertised, popularized and known to Sahelian youth and women, as agents and not only as beneficiaries. He stressed the importance of an effective GGW governance mechanism and strengthening national ownership adding that commitment must come from the Sahelian countries themselves and that funding should be prioritized in national budgets with well-defined and elaborated national roadmaps on which partners should align. Speaking to donors, Mr. Dieye recalled that the GGW is an "emergency programme," that therefore requires the release of funds in an "urgent" manner and that host countries must urgently implement the projects. Drawing examples from Senegal



and Gambia where Urgent Community Development Programmes are being implemented under fast-track modalities.

Mr. Dieye referred to emergency programmes wherein funds were delivered accordingly and referring to this example, encouraged that GGW funding be considered using a fast-track mode. Mr. Dieye underlined that programmes cannot be implemented top down and encouraged Governments to assume the responsibility of coordinating internally between the various Ministries concerned or organizing inter-ministerial councils on GGW– as is the case for the GGW in Senegal. He concluded by adding that capacity building is needed and encouraged the various Ministers to meet with the various international counterparts, present a roadmap and take ownership of the GGW.

#### **IV. Summary and closing**

The UNCCD Executive Secretary summarized the meeting. He outlined the key points raised and agreed:

- The GGWI consists of 11 countries and the funding mobilized is destined for these countries.
- An agreed political framework, which is the 5 pillars launched and agreed at the OPS, exists.
- There is a need for strong governance both at national and regional level; projects are largely country-specific and not transnational (though cooperation between countries is possible)
- The GGWI should be included in the national development plan of countries
- The PAAGGW is the entry point to countries and partners at the regional level
- There is need for better coordination among institutions and departments:
  - o At the national level through the creation of a coordination platform so countries can convene their partners
  - o At regional level through a regional platform with the PAAGGW and partners
- Countries should consider urgent/emergency implementation.
- There is some concern about the capacity to absorb the pledged funds:
  - o Support is needed to ensure that the funds are available and real (not double counted) and that countries can manage to navigate existing financial mechanisms
  - o Technical support is needed especially for project proposal formulation and implementation
- The common results management framework should be used.
- There is a need for established benchmarks and a common methodology for programme evaluation.
- The results management framework supported by a comprehensive and collective monitoring system can be a great tool in this regard.
- Capacity and empowerment: the PAAGGW does not yet have the necessary capacity to implement the GGW:
  - o Will the 11 countries provide additional capacities?



- Can technical partners reinforce capacities both at the regional level as well as national agencies to reinforce implementation?
- On the communiqué, the PAAGGW has proposed a draft and will take the lead in its finalization to underline the key points of this dialogue.

Ms. Bekaye closed by adding that GGW labeled projects should be exclusively implemented in the 11 GGW countries; and should both be included in the Decennial Priority Investment Plan and aligned with country priorities. She also enquired about the role of the accelerator and how it will be supporting countries in the implementation and monitoring of the projects.

**V. Follow up actions:**

On the question raised by H.E. Ms Bekaye, The UNCCD executive Secretary clarified that consultations will be undertaken with the PAGGW to explore launching an ad hoc poll to assess capacities and developing a framework to technically support/help upon request, GGW countries to formulate and implement projects.

The finalization of the draft Communiqué to be facilitated online by the PAGGW.