

GC45 Informal Event: Sahel, a land of opportunity

Tuesday, 15 February 2022, 13:00 - 14:15 (CET)

The Sahel stretches 6,000 kilometres and spans twelve countries from East to West Africa. It is home to 400 million people and has a variety of geographic and agro-ecological systems.

The region faces many challenges. Climate change threatens to further degrade land, vegetation, water resources, and food systems. Political instability has weakened livelihoods, threatened sovereignty, and undermined peace. The COVID-19 crisis exacerbates the situation.

The six-year [SD3C Sahel Joint Programme](#) responds to these challenges and aims to strengthen the livelihoods of small-scale agricultural producers, particularly women and youth, reaching over 850,000 people.

Join this Governing Council 45 informal event to learn how joint regional operations and financing can be used to bring together key players in the Sahel and harness the opportunities of this unique region.

Welcome remarks: Donal Brown, Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department, IFAD

Panel:

- Dr Robert Gouantoueu Guei, Head of the Sub-Regional Office for West Africa and FAO Representative in Senegal
- Boubacar Altine, Senior National Technical Assistant for Political Dialogue and Coordinator of the IFAD National Representation and Technical Assistance Unit
- Dr Papa Abdoulaye Seck, Ambassador of Senegal in Italy and Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations Rome-based agencies
- Ambassador Éric Yemdaogo Tiaré, Executive Secretary of the G5 Sahel
- Elvira Pruscini, Deputy Regional Director for Operations, World Food Programme
- Benoit Thierry, West-Africa Hub Head and IFAD Representative for Senegal

Moderator: Ndaya Beltchika, Lead Technical Specialist, Gender, Targeting and Social Inclusion, IFAD

Dr Robert Gouantoueu Guei

Head of the Sub-Regional Office for West Africa and FAO Representative in Senegal

Dr Guei heads FAO's West Africa office and is FAO's Representative in Senegal. Previous positions in FAO include Secretary of the Committee on Agriculture, Principal Technical Advisor of the Assistant Director General responsible for the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Protection, and Seed Officer in the Plant Production and Protection Division.

Boubacar Altine

Senior National Technical Assistant for Political Dialogue and Coordinator of the IFAD National Representation and Technical Assistance Unit

Boubacar Altine is Senior National Technical Assistant for Political Dialogue and Coordinator of the IFAD National Representation and Technical Assistance Unit. He coordinates the Sahel Point Programme in response to the challenges of COVID-19, conflict and climate change in Niger. He has over 15 years' experience coordinating and promoting national and sub-regional projects. Altine is specialized in land governance, transboundary transhumance, and peacebuilding.

Dr Papa Abdoulaye Seck

Ambassador of Senegal in Italy and Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations Rome-based agencies

Dr Seck is Ambassador of Senegal in Italy and Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations Rome-based agencies. He previously served as Senegal's Minister of Agriculture and Rural Equipment, Director General of AfricaRice, and Director General of the Senegalese Institute of Agricultural Research. He was awarded the African Union's Diploma of Merit in recognition of his scientific publications on food systems.

Ambassador Éric Yemdaogo Tiaré

Executive Secretary of the G5 Sahel

Éric Tiaré is Executive Secretary of the G5 Sahel. He was previously Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso to the United Nations in New York, as well as Ambassador to the French Republic, the Kingdom of Spain, the Principality of Monaco, the Portuguese Republic, and the Holy See. He also served as Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Burkina Faso to UNESCO. A career diplomat, he has held various positions in Burkina Faso's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Elvira Pruscini

Deputy Regional Director for Operations, World Food Programme

Elvira Pruscini is Deputy Regional Director for Operations at the World Food Programme's Regional Bureau in Dakar. She oversees strategies and emergency preparedness activities in West Africa. In 25 years with the UN, she has worked on emergency, post-conflict, refugee, early recovery, and development programmes across Africa and Haiti.

Benoit Thierry

West-Africa Hub Head and IFAD Representative for Senegal

Benoit Thierry is West-Africa Hub Head and IFAD Representative for Senegal. Before joining IFAD in 2004, Thierry had an extensive background working for a variety of NGOs focused on rural communities across Africa and Asia, including Rural Development Advisor for UNDP Cambodia and Portfolio Manager with UNOPS in Kenya.

Donal Brown

Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department, IFAD

Donal Brown is IFAD's Associate Vice-President of the Programme Management Department. He is responsible for developing and managing the operations that IFAD supports through its loans and grants. Brown previously worked at the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, including as the Africa Director.

Ndaya Beltchika

Lead Technical Specialist, Gender, Targeting and Social Inclusion, IFAD

Ndaya Beltchika is IFAD's Lead Technical Specialist for Gender, Targeting and Social Inclusion. Previously, Beltchika was Country Director in IFAD's West and Central Africa Division. Prior to joining IFAD, Beltchika worked for over 25 years in private sector development, policy dialogue, rural development, and rural finance.