

# STRENGTHENING THE RESILIENCE OF AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS AND FOOD SECURITY IN THE SAHEL



WFP/Cheick Omar Bandaogo

## PANEL DISCUSSION

29 January 2024, 15:00 - 16:30  
Conference Room 5

## MULTIMEDIA EXHIBITION

24 January – 2 February 2024  
UN Secretariat, 'Curved wall'

## EVIDENCE FROM THE GROUND AND SKY



## CONTEXT

The Sahel holds great potential for ecosystem restoration, including a wealth of untapped groundwater and renewable energy sources. The demographic dividends could be enormous if the very young population is provided with the necessary resources and opportunities to thrive. Though rich in potential, it faces significant challenges hindering progress in food security, sustainable employment, and environmental preservation. Armed conflicts, alongside poverty and rapid population growth, worsen the situation. Anticipated temperature increases 1.5 times higher than the global average exacerbate land degradation. Over 5 million people in the Sahel experience acute food insecurity.

To reduce humanitarian needs over time, a coalition of actors, including WFP, UNICEF, and GIZ, have been working together since 2018, thanks to Germany and other donors, to support the ambition of the Great Green Wall and implement an integrated resilience programme across the Sahelian countries of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. The approach combines a variety of land rehabilitation, agroecology and livelihood activities, home grown school feeding, nutrition interventions, support to smallholder farmers, and institutional capacity strengthening. Sustainable land and natural resource management is at the center of the approach, working to counteract land degradation, restore ecosystems, and enable sustainable access to water. Part-funded by Sahelian governments, the programme is helping to strengthen the capacity of local authorities to ensure sustainable investment in local and climate-resilient food systems and to promote economic development.

Five years into implementation, the programme has demonstrated positive outcomes in terms of food security and nutrition, as well as in decreasing pastoralist-farmer conflicts, offering sustainable solutions for displaced populations, natural land regeneration, access to social services and education, and women's empowerment. Evidence from several

countries shows that the assets constructed by and for communities are cost-efficient over time. Evidence from social protection and resilience-building interventions demonstrates their ability to contribute to reducing humanitarian needs.

**Building on the outcomes of the Food Systems Summit, the UN Climate Change Conference, and ahead of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification Conference in Riyadh in December 2024, now is the time to join forces, scale up climate resilience, and decrease humanitarian needs in the Sahel.**

## OBJECTIVES

The panel discussion aims to foster dialogue among essential stakeholders, including experts and representatives from national governments, and share evidence, and local solutions to enhance the resilience of agricultural and food systems in a region grappling with political crises, conflicts, and acute food insecurity.

The multi-media exhibition will make the results achieved so far accessible through high-quality photo and video material telling captivating personal stories, drone shots and satellite imagery showing large-scale land transformation, and WFP's latest virtual reality production, allowing participants of the event to step into a WFP resilience site. Together, the exhibition will tell the story of WFP's resilience work in areas that are difficult to access and are largely underreported. More specifically, the event aims to:

- Reflect on the need for longer-term programmes, embedded in national policies, to over time reduce the need for humanitarian assistance.
- Present how WFP works with partners to generate evidence on the transformative aspects of this investment and learn from others
- Call on other actors to join this collective action, to enable Sahelian communities and scale up land rehabilitation, and further support the objectives of the Great Green Wall in the Sahel

