



**Statement at the first Ministerial meeting of the
Coalition for the Sahel held by videoconference,
12 June 2020**

**Mr. Jeppe Kofod,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark**

The security situation in the Sahel region is becoming increasingly difficult. Extreme poverty, high population growth, and climate change intensify challenges. Terror groups have skillfully ex-ploited local conflicts and grievances. This has led to an unprece-dented humanitarian crisis. And it has further undermined the ca-pacity of the states to provide for their populations. The COVID-19 crisis has amplified these challenges.

Together, we must do more and better to improve the situation in the Sahel.

For many years, Denmark has enjoyed a close partnership with Ni-ger, Burkina Faso and Mali. We have bilateral cooperation pro-grams of approximately 67 million euro per year. More recently, we have developed a fruitful collaboration with the G5 Sahel. Our engagement is based on an integrated approach – long-term devel-opment cooperation, stabilization efforts, humanitarian assistance, and military contributions to MINUSMA and Operation Barkhane. We are convinced that this is the right combination if we are to achieve our goals.

Denmark therefore welcomes the establishment of the Sahel Coa-lition for the following main reasons:

- 1) The Coalition can give a renewed impetus to addressing the many challenges in the Sahel. Very pleased that we are so many partners gathered today.
- 2) We need to ensure better results of our substantial engagement. And make it more effective. The Coalition can be a key mechanism for this purpose.
- 3) The Coalition can improve coordination and coherence between the many initiatives in the Sahel. And it can apply an integrated approach across development, stabilization and security.

It is key for the success of the Coalition that it provides tangible results for the populations. This should guide our efforts. This should guide the institutional set-up of the Coalition. Good gov-ernance, protection of civilians and respect for human rights should be an intrinsic part of all the four pillars.

Finally, Denmark finds it particularly important that the Coalition also focusses on addressing the root causes of instability and fra-gility.

Thank you.