

Common Effort Meeting on G5 Sahel Berlin, 14 – 18 October 2019

Official summary of proceedings

From 14 to 18 October 2019, Common Effort took place in Berlin, Germany to discuss security, justice and development challenges and opportunities for the G5 Sahel countries of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger in a comprehensive way.

Common Effort, initiated in 2010 as a training platform for civil-military cooperation, reshaped its agenda to become more policy- and output-oriented by introducing a three-year regional focus in line with the policy priorities of Germany and The Netherlands.

Conflict dynamics in G5 Sahel region are complex and multi-layered. Therefore, only a comprehensive approach addressing the root causes of conflict and insecurity can be effective. Around 200 development workers, diplomats, policy makers and military officers reflected on the conflict dynamics as well as security and development connections and actions of national and international actors in the G5 Sahel. There were also participants from the G5 Sahel countries, both representatives from government and from civil society. Discussions took place under Chatham House Rule.

Representatives from the Burkina Faso presidency and the Permanent Secretariat of the G5 Sahel set the scene by sharing their views with regard to the challenges and opportunities to strengthen security, justice and development efforts in the region.

The German and Dutch ministries of Foreign Affairs briefed the participants on their respective priorities to support the G5 Sahel countries. Thomas Silberhorn, Parliamentary State Secretary of the Federal German Ministry of Defence, discussed the German approach towards the security situation in the G5 Sahel. Participants were also briefed about the ongoing efforts by the EU and about the French military operation Barkhane. In addition, other experts, including members of the International Crisis Group, Alliance Sahel and representatives from the Sahel civil society, shared their knowledge and insights on the conflict dynamics and the coordination of development efforts.

During panel discussions, expert modules and a comprehensive planning exercise, participants assessed the current situation, identified gaps and proposed solutions. Discussions focused on topics such as trust building; human rights, dialogue with local leadership, the nexus between the G5 Joint Force, police and the justice chain; security and development in border areas; innovation for development and stability. It emphasised the importance of including women and young people in local security and peace building.

The discussions not only contributed to a better understanding of the key challenges as well as the opportunities to support existing security, justice and development efforts. They also underlined that security, justice and development challenges can be only addressed effectively through comprehensive civil-military cooperation that include young people and women from local communities.

Key outcomes of the discussions were, amongst others:

- The participants underlined the urgency to look beyond the nexus of security and development and rebuild the trust of communities by focusing on human security and both accountability and legitimacy of the state and its institutions;
- Invest in resilience of the population, since the 'training and equip' approach is not sufficient for the prevention or resolution of conflicts;
- Inclusive access to natural resources, governance, justice and economic opportunities embedded in local ownership are key to long-term solutions. It is essential that the different actors in the region act in line with security, justice and development efforts of the G5 Sahel;
- Include the local population in local security and border management;

- Include a particular focus on strengthening women and the youth in stabilization and peace processes;
- Cooperation between the different military missions of MINUSMA, Barkhane, G5 Joint Force and EUTM should be increased in order to provide more security and safety for the population;
- Joint mapping and knowledge management will increase effectiveness of different programmes and initiatives.

Participants expressed the wish to continue the constructive cooperation between the Common Effort Community and the G5 Sahel to follow up on the outcomes of Common Effort 2019.

Common Effort 2020 will take place in The Hague, The Netherlands from 15-19 June 2020.

