29 September 2020

Excellency,

The Governments of Denmark and Germany, the European Union and the United Nations have the honor to invite you to a virtual Ministerial Roundtable on the Central Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger) on Tuesday, 20 October 2020 from 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. EST/12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. GMT/2:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. CEST. The event is held with a view to mobilize both urgently needed funding and policy commitments to address humanitarian challenges and growing needs in the region.

The Central Sahel region is fast becoming one of the most challenging and complex humanitarian crises worldwide. More than thirteen million people require urgent humanitarian assistance in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, five million more than estimated at the beginning of the year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing unprecedented needs in the Central Sahel caused by climate shocks and violence affecting already vulnerable populations. Food insecurity, protection needs, forced displacement, access challenges and a fragile socio-economic landscape means the situation is at risk of worsening. In the cross-border region of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, the number of internally displaced people has risen from 70,000 to 1.4 million in less than two years. Human rights and International Humanitarian Law violations, including gender-based violence and violence against children, are rising sharply. Estimations show that national lockdowns and other COVID-19 mitigation measures immediately pushed an additional 9.1 per cent of the population, about 6 million people, into extreme poverty and at risk to fall into crisis.

Funding is urgently needed. Nearly ten months into the year, humanitarian response plans remain severely underfunded. The humanitarian community estimates they will require up to $1.4 billion to deliver lifesaving assistance for the remainder of this year and in 2021. Strong policy engagements are also equally urgently required to address challenges in protection, access to vulnerable populations, respect of humanitarian principles and International Humanitarian Law, and to strengthen the articulation between humanitarian, development and peace actions.

The Ministerial Roundtable aims to gather political momentum and mobilize support from partners to address the humanitarian needs and challenges in the region. It follows the successful Senior Officials’ Meeting held on 8 September that identified and recommended actions and new approaches as a basis for both immediate and longer-term response. Member States and other key partners are welcome to make both financial announcements and policy commitments at the event.

Member States and partners are strongly encouraged to participate at the ministerial level, to propose policy commitments and make generous announcements. All commitments, contributions and announcements will be reflected in official event documents. Financial announcements can target 2020 and the following years (2021, 2022 and beyond), covering humanitarian actions and related longer-term engagements to address humanitarian challenges in the Central Sahel Region. We look forward to receiving confirmation of the participation of your Government by Tuesday, 13 October 2020.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

[Signatures]

H.E. Rasmus Prehn
Minister for Development Cooperation
Denmark

H.E. Heiko Maas
Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs
Germany

H.E. Commissioner Janez Lenarčič
European Union

USG/ERC Mark Lowcock
United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

Date
Tuesday, 20 October 2020

Time
8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. EST
12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. GMT
2:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. CEST

Registration
Kindly note that delegation size is principal plus 3. Please register by Friday, 9 October 2020. The registration form is available here.

Background Information
Background documents from the Senior Officials’ Meeting as well as the announcement form for this event are available online here.

Further Information
Please contact Ms. Amierah Ismail, UN OCHA by email, ismail53@un.org and Ms. Ahlam Shaker, UN OCHA by email, shaker2@un.org.