The Danish Government in partnership with the German Government, the European Union, and the United Nations is hosting a high-level humanitarian event on the Central Sahel. The event will be divided into two separate meetings: a virtual senior officials’ meeting, which will take place on 8 September and a ministerial roundtable on 20 October. The first part of the event, the virtual senior officials’ meeting (SOM), will focus on operational lessons learned and forward looking plans for select thematic tracks that cut across humanitarian action, development and peace efforts, including special attention to the impact and consequences of COVID-19.

The SOM will serve as a technical discussion forum, which will inform the ministerial roundtable in October.

Objectives and outcomes:

The objectives and outcomes of the SOM will be to:

• Discuss key issues related to the humanitarian, development and peace context in the region with a view to mobilising humanitarian and complementary development and peace actors around key priority actions in response to the current humanitarian crises. Through this, the SOM will provide detailed inputs to the ministerial roundtable, enabling this to reach its three objectives;

• Discuss challenges and propose solutions as well as investment priorities for the humanitarian response, including a focus on strengthening resilience; based in particular on findings and recommendations from the workshops for civil society and humanitarian organizations conducted in Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali in July 2020; and,

• Provide the elements for strengthened political support, including at national level, for principled humanitarian action, unimpeded humanitarian access to those affected by the crises, and strengthened protection of vulnerable populations affected by conflicts.

The discussions in the SOM will focus on three priority tracks:

• Basic services: the efficient and sustainable redeployment of basic services in impacted areas, including health, nutrition, education, food security, social protection and access to water.
• **Protection**: strengthening protection services, including humanitarian, legal and social approaches, human rights, protection of civilians, ensuring a holistic and effective coverage of needs in affected areas.

• **Access, Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord) and humanitarian principles**: ensure access to the people in need, reaffirmation of humanitarian principles and the humanitarian space as well as the strengthening of the civil-military coordination in affected areas.

There will be a panel discussion for each of the three tracks. Each panel will include a representation from key practitioners as per the themes and issues to be discussed.

Panel discussions: Each panel shall come up with clear and concrete recommendations for the Ministerial Roundtable. All participants will receive the outcome products from the preparatory workshops in advance of the meeting.

1. **Basic services. The following issues will be discussed by the panelists:**
   - Structural challenges related to the provision of basic services
   - Required adaptation to a fluid context and crisis situation
   - Setting up a joint planning framework
   - Funding
   - Aspects to take into consideration for the implementation of a Triple Nexus approach

2. **Protection. The following issues will be discussed by the panelists:**
   - Implementation of existing protection texts, declarations and frameworks
   - Elaboration and implementation of a protection strategy
   - Funding
   - Setting a framework for an inclusive dialogue and strengthening protection governance

3. **Access, Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord) and humanitarian principles. The following issues will be discussed by the panelists:**
   - Highlighting key issues from the context and insecurity
   - Increased obstacles to maintain access to the population affected by conflict
   - Strengthening respect of IHL and humanitarian principles
   - Strengthening civil-military coordination

**Participants:**

Representatives from affected governments and member states, regional organizations, civil society actors, international and national non-governmental organizations, international humanitarian and development organizations, multilateral financing institutions, the United Nations and its operational agencies, the International Committee for the Red Cross, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movements and other key stakeholders are invited to participate at the Senior Official/Director level.