



# REPORT

*Accelerating The Great Green Wall: Fostering The  
Africa-Europe Partnership For A Just Rural Transformation  
In The Sahel*

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## 1st Panel: Eye-opening high-level kick-off session

### Speakers:

- **Catherine Chabaud**, MEP (Renew), Member of the Development (DEVE) Committee, Member of the Intergroup on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development, Member of the SDG Alliance
- **Chrysoula Zacharopoulou**, Minister of State for Development, Francophonie and International Partnerships
- **Ibrahim Mayaki**, AU Special Envoy for Food Systems, and Co-chair of the Africa-Europe Foundation Strategy Group on Agriculture and Food Systems; Honorary President of the Sahel and West Africa Club at the OECD; former Prime Minister of Niger and CEO of AUDA-NEPAD
- **Dr Sakhoudia Thiam**, Head of the Research and Development in the Pan African Agency of the Great Green Wall (PAAGGW)
- **Ibrahim Thiaw**, Executive Secretary at the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- **S.E Mahamadou Issoufou**, former President of Niger, President of the Mahamadou Issoufou Foundation, Champion of the Great Green Wall and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and member of the Africa-Europe Foundation (AEF) High Level Panel of Personalities
- **Stéphane Bijoux**, MEP (Renew), Vice-chair of the Committee on Development (DEVE), Chair of the EU-CARIFORUM Delegation, Member of the Intergroup on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development
- **Jutta Urpilainen**, European Commissioner for International Partnerships



The Great Green Wall represents a paradigm shift in development assistance, as it is an innovative trans-regional project with its own challenges. That's why innovation in the institutional framework is also needed to manage and implement the Green Wall, particularly concerning responsibility-sharing between nation-states, the African Union, and ideally the private sector. Furthermore, the learning dimension should be added as a *sinequanon* condition in the framework of the partnership between the EU and the AU and the infrastructural context (such as irrigation and digitalization) should also be taken into high consideration.

In order to achieve youth and women empowerment in the Sahel, one of the biggest challenges of the project is to “transform the dollars in hectares” by accelerating its implementation and the institutionalization of its benefits through the involvement of the World Bank, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the European institutions.

This project will receive € 16 billion by 2025 through international partnerships with the aim of planting 2 million trees per year to tackle climate change risks and food insecurity, poverty, new job creation as well as terrorism and organized crime. In this way, the Great Green Wall will not only benefit the sustainable development of African populations but



also Europe and the entire planet. That's why Europe has to support this project by finding new financing sources and better coordinating the Global Gateway strategy with local actors with coherence and collective intelligence.

## 2nd Panel: From words to action – implementing the Great Green Wall

### Speakers:

- **Oumar Abdoulaye Bâ**, Director of ASERGMV (Senegalese Agency for the Great Green Wall reforestation)
- **Birguy Lamizana**, Sahel Senior Programme Manager, Global Mechanism at the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- **Yusuf Maina Bakar**, Director of the Great Green Wall for Nigeria Rémi Hémercyck, Executive Director SOS Sahel
- **Patrick Worms**, Senior Science Policy Advisor, CIFOR-ICRAF
- **Nabil Ben Khadra**, Executive Secretary of the Sahel and Sahara Observatory
- **Andrew Harper**, Special Advisor to the High Commissioner for Climate Action at the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHCR)
- **Rémi Hémercyck**, Executive Director SOS Sahel
- **Diane Binder**, Founding Partner & CEO at Regenopolis





There are three points on which to focus governance action:

- 1) coordination between technical and financial partners: actors at the national level (local NGOs, private sector and technical-financial partners) needed to be involved in order to capitalize
- 2) Private involvement besides public funds
- 3) Monitoring & evaluation: working to have common indicators (now 11 countries share a framework)

The need to tackle migration outflows from Africa is important also for African societies as it leads to brain drain and loss of workforce. These could be addressed by building resilient communities with water, energy and technology accessibility as well as by including the interested communities in the decision-making processes. Even if some results have been achieved on the ground, some other regions have been affected by irreversible soil desertification due to human-made activities (deforestation and agricultural expansion). That's why investments and an updated objective mapping of the situation on the ground are needed, in order to design reality-tailored projects at both the national and regional levels, hence achieving a global approach within this initiative.



It is clear that there is a “momentum” for the promotion of empowerment to really make an impact with the aim of stabilizing the local context as well as giving dignity and alternatives to local populations as there are negative trends in terms of future water competition and displacements.

In this project, public aid is needed to the extent that it actively involves local communities in the designing, implementation and ownership of products as well as in the support of the whole ecosystem to attract foreign investments. Among other actions, there is the creation of entrepreneurs by facilitating access to expertise, packaging and finance, the support of community centers and new opportunities for the rural population.

### **3rd Panel: Unlocking finance & delivering an ambitious Africa-Europe agenda for the Great green wall**

#### **Speakers:**

- **Myriam Ferran**, Deputy Director-General at the European Commission Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA)
- **Dorsuma Al-Hamndou**, Division Manager, Climate and Green Growth Department at African Development Bank Group (AfDB)
- **Markus Berndt**, Director-General and acting Managing Director at the European Investment Bank (EIB)
- **Estherine Fotabong**, Director of Programme Implementation and Coordination at the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD)
- **Sandra Rullière**, Deputy Head of Rural Development and Agriculture Division at the French Development Agency (AFD)
- **William Kwende**, Founder of Serious Shea Ahmed Aziz Diallo, Mayor of Dori & C3Sahel Coordinator
- **Barry Andrews**, Member of the European Parliament (Renew), President of the SDG Alliance



The Global Gateway strategy highlights the commitment of the European Commission to achieve a sustainable concrete impact on the ground. It does not start from scratch, since many projects qualified under the Great Green Wall aiming at reaching socio-economic development in a sustainable manner, protecting biodiversity, developing sustainable agro-food or agroforestry chains, and regulating migration patterns of the region are already included in several objectives of the SDGs. Furthermore, there are € 14.5 million for the implementation of new projects in Niger, Chad and Nigeria. As this is a long-term initiative, the regional crises are jeopardizing the achievements of these projects in the Sahel, but the extensive partnerships (national government, civil society, other key players) made by the EU, as well as small regional programs to support institutional partners in the implementation and the support of EU delegations on the ground, are one of the key elements of success.

Also the AfDB has an ambitious strategy, including \$20 billion to finance green electricity access in the Sahel as well as in the transformation of the agricultural sector from now until 2025 (i.g. tackling drought in the Horn of Africa or the installment of “agro-industrial zones” in the Sahel). It is also involved in the development of the audit institution of the African Development Agency and other national and regional programs.



Nevertheless, the issues of the Great Green Wall are diverse:

- Underfunding
- The focus on relatively stable regions is a problem, as it should include also less stable regions to achieve the SDGs
- Lack of engagement and of donors
- Dispersive monitoring and coordination mechanisms

Last but not least, the local private sector should be more and more involved as it should take the role of building up African value chains to make the project survive for generations. This sector should be helped by the AfDB in the process and in the development of technology without using fossil fuels but connecting local communities affected by the Great Green Wall. Although this project is the most important opportunity for the African private sector to make a sustainable investment and infrastructural environment, they also need government systems that deliver and take responsibility. In addition, as economic growth may reach over \$ 50 billion by 2030, international partnerships should also take into high consideration the urgent need for African entrepreneurs to export their products to Europe.