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Request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the agenda of the seventy-fifth session

Observer status for the Global Dryland Alliance in the General Assembly

Letter dated 15 August 2020 from the representatives of Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Qatar and Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Pursuant to rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, we have the honour to request the inclusion in the agenda of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly of a supplementary item entitled “Observer status for the Global Dryland Alliance in the General Assembly”.

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum on and description of the Global Dryland Alliance (annex I) and a draft resolution (annex II) are attached. We should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Wendbigda Honorine **Bonkougou**

Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Permanent Mission of Burkina Faso

(Signed) Fatoumata **Kaba**

Permanent Representative of the Republic of Guinea

(Signed) Issa **Konfourou**

Permanent Representative of the Republic of Mali

(Signed) Alya Ahmed Saif **Al-Thani**

Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar

(Signed) Kais **Kabtani**

Permanent Representative of the Republic of Tunisia

* Reissued for technical reasons on 23 September 2020.



Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

Historical background of the Global Dryland Alliance

1. Over 2.8 billion people living in dryland countries are faced with increasingly complex and interlinked challenges to their food security. Diminished food production, loss of biodiversity and climate change are but a few of the challenges threatening the food security of dryland countries.
2. In its Millennium Ecosystem Assessment report, the United Nations classified some 50 countries as drylands, with another 100 countries falling under the categories of semi-drylands, or arid lands. The world's drylands present a vision that is disturbing and urgent. These lands symbolize the forecast of a warming planet which, combined with population growth, increases the likelihood of food crises.
3. Drylands are home to almost 3 billion people, 90 per cent of whom live in developing countries. These lands suffer tremendous pressures on their natural resources, such as water, soils and biodiversity, and their populations are particularly susceptible to the adverse consequences of climate change.
4. At the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, held in 2010, the Assembly highlighted concern with the lack of progress in reducing hunger and poverty in dryland areas, which account for well over half of the world's hungry and poor.
5. By working collaboratively with a range of countries and organizations committed to addressing the food security of dryland residents, the Global Dryland Alliance will focus on bridging current gaps in research, strategy and policy to enable dryland states to improve food security and ensure the future well-being of their people. As an alliance of people and organizations, we are dedicated to the development of agriculture and the search for sources of reliable and affordable food, water and energy to sustain the peoples of the drylands. Together, we are more than the sum of our parts; collectively, we can and will develop solutions for these countries to place food security within the grasp of millions of people who currently exist without it.

Establishment of the Global Dryland Alliance

6. The First Assembly of the Global Dryland Alliance was held from 14 to 16 October 2017, in Doha, Qatar. The Assembly adopted a number of significant decisions, including on a programme of work and budget. One of the major decisions at the First Assembly was an agreement among the founding members to establish the Alliance on 15 October 2017, along with a decision to locate its headquarters in Doha.

Mandate

7. In order to achieve the goals of the Alliance specified in article 2 of the convention, the Alliance is mandated to carry out the following major activities:
 - (a) Identify, review and suggest improvements in members' planning processes and in particular, policies aimed at enhancing food security;
 - (b) Actively engage in research and technological innovation relevant to members' needs in the use of water and energy for agricultural purposes and for food security;
 - (c) Evaluate research and formulate proposals for the implementation of development programmes in member States and enhance their food security;

- (d) Take pre-emptive measures to anticipate and avert food crisis situations;
- (e) Adopt joint policies and take measures to mitigate and address members' food security threats;
- (f) Develop the capacity of member States to enable each member as well as the Alliance to respond to and manage food security crises;
- (g) Facilitate and coordinate the participation of the Alliance members in international and multilateral food security-related efforts and projects;
- (h) Broaden the dissemination of the benefits of the latest research and technological innovation among members for the purpose of reducing malnourishment, hunger and poverty;
- (i) The Global Dryland Alliance may perform additional functions and tasks as needed and when required by the Executive Council.

Membership

8. The founding members that have become engaged in the Global Dryland Alliance since its establishment in 2017 are: Republic of Benin, Burkina Faso, Republic of Guinea, Republic of Guinea-Bissau, Republic of Iraq, Republic of Mali, Kingdom of Morocco, State of Qatar, Republic of Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania and Republic of Tunisia. The Alliance is open to all dryland, semi-dryland and arid countries, as well as countries that share in the vision of the Alliance.

Organizational structure

Secretariat

9. The General Secretariat carries out the Alliance secretariat functions under the authority of the Executive Council and the supervision and guidance of the Executive Director. The Secretariat is responsible for implementing the Alliance's workplan and for achieving its objectives.

Executive Council

10. The Executive Council is the highest decision-making body of the Alliance and comprises one representative from each member country. The Executive Council meets at least twice a year at the headquarters of the Alliance. It can also meet with the concurrence of the member States at a location other than the headquarters, if so decided by the Council. The chairmanship of the Executive Council rotates among the members on an annual basis in alphabetical order based on the English alphabet.

11. For the benefit of its members, the Alliance:

- (a) Works to enhance their food security by improving their individual capabilities to prevent food crises and to develop Alliance response capabilities to crises through mutual cooperation and assistance using their individual and collective resources as and when required;
- (b) Maintains, enhances and develops their individual and collective capacities to combat the threat of food shortages; commission research and implement measures to develop new solutions to their common food security problems; and provide mutual assistance in exceptional circumstances;
- (c) Fosters consultations among members and convenes, if necessary, when a member State perceives the imminence of a threat to the food security of one or more of the members or of the Alliance as a whole;
- (d) Transfers knowledge and shares best practices;

- (e) Leverages existing research and development among multilateral organizations and the private sector;
- (f) Develops access to financial support for research, development, training and technology transfer as well as provides mechanisms for financing food security-related investments;
- (g) Facilitates association with international organizations and experts;
- (h) Improves members' food security policies and planning;
- (i) Adopts joint measures to mitigate members' food security vulnerabilities;
- (j) Engages in joint research and technological innovation relevant to members' agricultural, water and energy use needs;
- (k) Shares the benefits of new research and technological innovation in the interest of reducing hunger, poverty and food security-related efforts;
- (l) Facilitates the joint participation of members in international and multilateral food security related efforts;
- (m) Coordinates with the private sector to implement and disseminate innovative solutions in food security.

Advantages for the United Nations in granting observer status to the Global Dryland Alliance

12. Pursuant to article 6 and 7 of the statute, the Global Dryland Alliance performs its activities in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations to promote peace and international cooperation, in conformity with policies of the United Nations that further sustainable development goals. In pursuit of its mandate, the Alliance complements global and sectoral mandates and strategies of the United Nations and specialized agencies, such as the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the United Nations Environment Programme. There is clear potential for close cooperation between the United Nations and the Alliance. Identifying synergies and coordinating activities would ensure efficient use of resources and coherence in addressing major challenges such as food security, poverty alleviation and achieving sustainable development goals. The Alliance is fully committed to working with global partners and expertise that can assist with addressing these challenges.

Advantages for the Global Dryland Alliance in obtaining observer status in the General Assembly

13. The following of and participation in the relevant aspects of the work of the General Assembly and related United Nations processes would enable the Global Dryland Alliance to work on behalf of its members most severely affected by dryland challenges. We see collaboration with the United Nations and its agencies as the tool that will lead to the creation of new solutions for dryland countries. Through research and technological innovation, as well as a focus on policy creation and improvement, we can find solutions that address food security in drylands countries.

Annex II

Draft resolution

Observer status for the Global Dryland Alliance in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Noting the aspiration of the Global Dryland Alliance and its mission to promote food security and poverty alleviation in dryland countries with a view to achieving sustainable development,

Convinced of the benefits of cooperation between the United Nations and the Global Dryland Alliance,

1. *Decides* to invite the Global Dryland Alliance to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;
 2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolution.
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