Sahel: Placing border areas at the heart of our response

With porous borders in vast and sparsely populated areas, Sahel countries face many cross-border challenges: irregular migration, drug trafficking, arms and human trafficking, violent extremist networks. A new approach is needed to secure the improvement of border management and human security in border regions of the Sahel, combining national and transnational interventions.

Border Areas

- **4,168,900 km²**
  - Area covered by G5 Sahel
- **5,861 km**
  - Internal borders among G5 Sahel countries
- **15,453 km**
  - External borders of G5 Sahel countries

For comparison:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Area (km²)</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>65,578,819</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe (28 mb)</td>
<td>4,271,600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US external</td>
<td>12,034</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Border Management & Human Security**

As part of its efforts to operationalize the UN integrated strategy, UNDP conducted field surveys to shape future programming, with a particular focus on small arms proliferation and cross-border communities and communities. With Japan’s support, a new project dedicated to managing border areas and strengthening human security has been developed:

1. **Bassikounou**
   - Mauritania – Mali borders
   - Developing national policies for involvement of border communities in border management
   - National policy makers & civil society have better understanding of the importance of informal cross-border trade
   - Support for inclusive strategies and border management policies placing communities at their core
   - Developing the capacities of Border Agencies

2. **Liptako-Gourma triangle**
   - Burkina Faso – Mali – Niger borders

3. **Lake Chad**
   - Niger – Chad border
UNDP in the Sahel

The Sahel is facing complex challenges to long-term peace, stability and development. Chronic poverty, food insecurity, compounded by climate-related shock, conflicts and cross-border crime and increased threat of terrorism have combined to create situations of extreme vulnerability.

**Situation**

- **66.7 million** population in the Sahel
- **3%** Annual population growth rate (among the world's highest)
- **20 million** Food insecure people in 2014 (11.3 million in 2013)
- **Across the Sahel 1.2 million people were forced to flee violence and insecurity.**

UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel

Following the political and security crisis in Mali, the countries of the Sahel region took the lead to address their outstanding challenges, supported by the UN which developed an integrated strategy focusing on boosting governance, security and resilience. The result of a comprehensive consultative process, the strategy is articulated around 3 pillars:

- **Governance**
  - Strengthening national & regional capacities to counter cross-border security threats.
- **Security**
- **Resilience**
  - Integrating humanitarian and development interventions to support long-term resilience.
  - Promoting inclusive governance.

UNDP’s Action

As coordinator of the Governance pillar, UNDP promotes synergies among stakeholders to strengthen national justice systems, electoral processes and local governance, in order to enhance security and development in border areas.

With the support of the Government of Japan, UNDP is implementing a US$ 20 million programme, focusing on strengthening peace-building, governance and resilience.