



# SOS SAHEL'S AFRICA DAYS CELEBRATION

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT ON

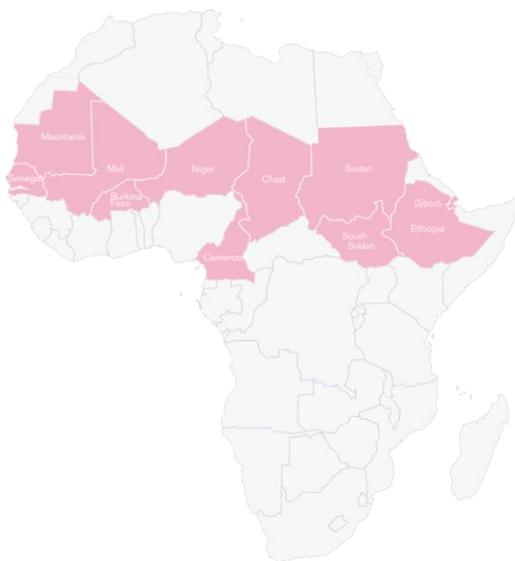
“HOW TO IMPLEMENT AND UPSCALE SUSTAINABLE FOOD SECURITY  
AND NUTRITION PROGRAMS IN THE SAHEL”

JUNE 2017



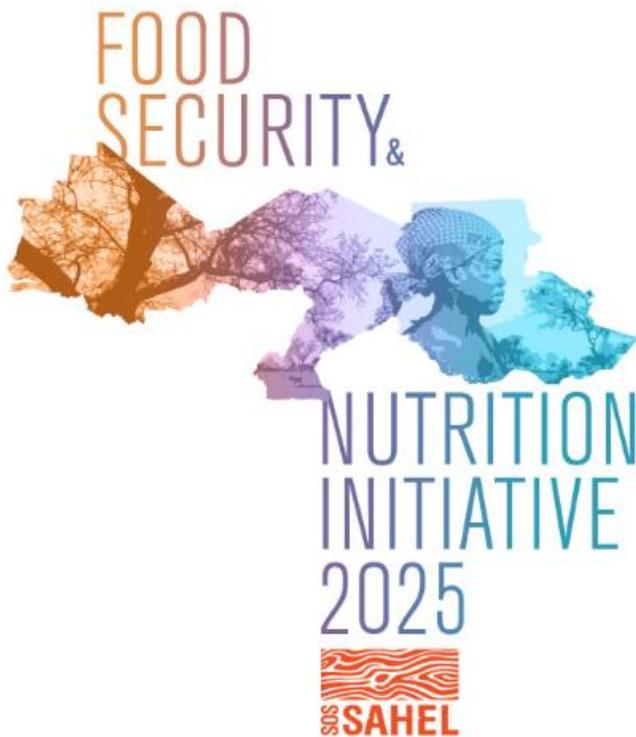
**Dakar, Senegal, May 24, 2017.** To celebrate international Africa Day and to conclude its 40th anniversary celebrations in Senegal, SOS SAHEL was joined by a team of globally recognized experts in the international food security, nutrition and agricultural fields to deliver a powerful message of hope and opportunity to the Sahel region.

Since its creation by the visionary Senegalese President Léopold Sédar Senghor as a response to the devastating droughts of the 1970s, SOS SAHEL's expertise has delivered about 500 projects and worked with over 1,000 Sahelian community groups to improve the lives, nutrition and livelihoods of millions of people across the region.



Today SOS SAHEL works in 11 countries with four million producers across the Sahel to address and combat the challenges the drylands face, including environmental impacts such as climate change and natural resource management, as well as social and economic threats, to improve the lives of most vulnerable populations in Africa with concrete action-oriented approach. SOS SAHEL's Food Security and Nutrition Initiative 2025 provides a framework to reach global, regional and national targets and developmental goals.

# SOS SAHEL'S FOOD SECURITY APPROACH



SOS SAHEL's **Food Security & Nutrition Initiative 2025** is a campaign of renewal and regeneration for the 11 countries of a Sahel region.

SOS SAHEL's approach implements advances in farm management, science and technology, and land restoration and environmental protection to ensure food security and nutrition by evaluating dryland opportunities and its potential for future global growth. For instance, just 20% of Sahelian land is irrigated. This means that with the effective application of sustainable farming methods and technological advances, the percentage of irrigated land will increase, yielding great regional benefits.

SOS SAHEL's food security and nutrition approach ensures the region's potentials for both domestic needs and new international

markets, which are essential to foster sustainable growth for the region, as well as provides tools to combat the risks and negative impacts of climate change and other emerging natural and man-made threats.

SOS SAHEL's critical priorities:

- Food security, nutrition and resilience;
- Land restoration and eco-friendly agriculture;
- Shared growth, wealth and prosperity.

# CELEBRATING SOS SAHEL'S AFRICA DAYS AND WAY FORWARD

SOS SAHEL'S Africa Days celebration highlighted three major activities:

Dakar, Senegal – May 14th, 2017 - SOS SAHEL and its partners urged enhancement of mutual accountability for results and impact towards development of the Sahel with a walk on the Dakar streets in order to create awareness and accelerate the implementation of the food security and nutrition actions for a sustainable Africa.

May 24th, 2017 - SOS SAHEL and its partners organized a fundraising gala with African companies to strengthen mutual accountability to achieve common goals and targets as a key determining factor for Africa's development.

May 25th to 27th, 2017 - Partners from both the public and private sectors, including institutional representatives, joined SOS SAHEL on the field for a three day forum to evaluate local potentials and challenges in different regions of Senegal. The forum was organized in collaboration with the local communities to showcase proven solutions and experiences to achieve a better impact, focusing on 3 primary subjects of:





## How to improve efficiency of eco-friendly agricultural and tree based models to restore degraded lands and combat climate change?

Degradation of soil and desertification are a main focus area for SOS SAHEL, with respect to environmental protection and the economic value of the natural resource management.

Over the past 4 decades, farmers have partnered with SOS SAHEL to implement the best approaches and upscale their innovation to grow agricultural products, tailored to their specific contexts. In doing so they are fully capable of agricultural production with the most efficient and eco-friendly methods available. The development of agriculture is a key method to incorporate the global environment around the market, the local governance, and the landscapes, into the solution.

Sustainable land management is a way to look on a wide range of land restoration and crop diversification; it is important to focus on value chains that will enable farmers to capitalize their potentials by improving the techniques and upscale local innovations. For instance, trees are very important due to their contribution towards the economy and their ability to fight land degradation, mainly agricultural land degradation and desertification.

The new edition food security and nutrition initiative of SOS SAHEL reintroduced a revised tree-based approach that supports the agricultural systems while developing and valorizing the use of trees in a given land scale approach.

During SOS SAHEL's Africa Days celebration, the **United Nations Ambassador for the Drylands, Dr. Dennis Garrity**, the former director general of the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) and a member of SOS SAHEL's International Advisory Council, explained that, "Across the Sahel we are seeing increasing evidence that sustainable farming approaches backed by SOS SAHEL are game-changing for the Drylands. For example, with Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) more than 7 million hectares of land in Niger have been regenerated in a highly cost effective manner in a closely managed evidence-

based project whereby income sustaining regeneration and re-greening can be achieved for Sahelian farming families for less than 15 USD per hectare”.

SOS SAHEL is currently pursuing a partnership with ICRAF on specific land restoration initiative “AFR 100” to contribute, address and tackle challenges faced in our common areas to provide a technical support and address key knowledge gaps.

*During the Africa Days celebration SOS SAHEL and its partners planted 200 fruit trees in the region of Lompoul, Senegal in a village farm of Ndiawangne.*



## How to valorize the varieties of dryland fruits, seeds, timber potentials for better food security and nutrition?



Although there are many resources and potentials of diversified products available in Africa, the consumption of protein in the countries with people consuming the most limited amounts of protein continues to decrease. In the Sahel region, malnutrition and food insecurity remains a persistent problem as well as in developing world.

Food and nutrition security is the goal of interest for SOS SAHEL, to achieve the United Nations SDG's Goal 2 Zero Hunger. In particular, SOS SAHEL targets a campaign to achieve by 2020 the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and valorizing of local nutritional products in a combined estimates of access to clean water and good sanitation.

During the Africa Days celebration SOS SAHEL held a forum in Ndiawagne Fall, Lompoul with local actors, international partners and government representatives to showcase the importance of local products that can conquer international tastes and markets to bring new sources of income to Sahelian communities. International **chef Pierre Thiam** used a local seedling called "fonio" which was transformed into different types of adopted food varieties.

Fonio is an herbaceous annual plant cultivated for its seeds. It is traditionally known as a "minor" cereal, which is of economic importance only in some parts of West Africa.



*Fonio Seeds*

*Sushi Fonio*



*Chef Pierre Thiam (left) explaining the nutritional value and diversity of fonio*



## How to disperse services, techniques and technologies to the local actors?

For many years Africa was described as a dark continent with a low consumption of electricity. Thanks to technology advancement, today it is possible to use natural resources like solar energy and wind biogas to generate electricity and power which creates a green-oriented, zero carbon emission economic sector that contributes to the global and regional development initiatives in Africa.

The African Sahel has a huge capacity to light all the world by just using the solar energy in the region. This is why it is a major mission of SOS SAHEL to promote and develop renewable energy across the Sahel.

During the Africa Days celebration SOS SAHEL partnered with MWEZI, a solar lamp and mobile charger company to promote the improved quality of life through innovative solar products in the region of Lompoul, Senegal.

For the past 10 years SOS SAHEL has been working with the local communities to minimize the consumption of firewood by introducing culturally adapted cooking stoves in order to protect the natural vegetation and land degradation of the region. This method has been efficient and easily adopted by the local actors.

Today, with innovative technology and initiatives it is possible to light Africa by simply using the adopted technology.

SOS SAHEL's services are not limited only to access to technologies and information, but include also knowledge management as the key sector to achieve sustainable development. SOS SAHEL experts are working closely with local communities, including local governance and authorities on the ground, to empower and manage knowledge flow and technical support on how to use and apply the uses of renewable energy like solar, wind and biogas in order to apply it to their daily activities.

# CONCLUSION

There is an increasingly urgent need for SOS SAHEL's approach and methodologies to be replicated and scaled up across the Sahel region. By 2050 the Sahel will be home to 500 million people that will increasingly demand sustainable livelihoods, better employment opportunities and improved food security and nutrition. SOS SAHEL's food security and nutrition approach is engaged for robust sustainable growth and development that creates stability and social vibrancy for communities across the Sahel.

SOS SAHEL used the Africa Days celebration as a means of communication to continuously address the challenges and demonstrate effective solutions in the Sahel on how to achieve the objectives of the Great Green Wall Initiative for the Sahara and Sahel of the African Union, as well as the sustainable development goals of the United Nations to eradicate hunger by 2030.

SOS SAHEL's initiative is a concrete and living example of an inclusive approach, a means to implement diversified partnerships that promote a spirit of strengthened impact focused on global solidarity that puts first the needs and priorities of the Sahelian communities.

