



## SEMINAR ON SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE SAHEL

CASA ÁFRICA, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

(July 19th 2011)

### CONCLUSIONS

Currently, the Sahel region represents a **challenge for both European and international foreign action**. In the region there is a confluence of challenges to which the international community has decided to pay special attention. Poverty, underdevelopment, desertification, porous borders, difficult distribution of wealth, democratic governance, decentralization, integration of nomadic populations (such as the Tuareg) and the inability of States to control their vast territories, have allowed this area has become a **crossroads for international security**.

This situation has unfortunately been the **breeding ground** for the emergence and establishment of fundamentalist terrorist groups (mainly AQIM), as well as the proliferation of **illicit trafficking of all kinds**, both a source of concern for all.

Spain, well aware of the seriousness of the challenge of insecurity in the Sahel, decided to organize a **Seminar on Security and Development in the Sahel**, in which the four Sahelian nations as well as other international actors interested in the region were represented. The **objective of the Seminar** was to maintain a sincere and open exchange of ideas on a number of **issues of mutual interest** that affect the security and development of the region. The Seminar was held in *Casa África*, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, on July 19<sup>th</sup> 2011, and the **main conclusions** were:



### SESSION 1:

- There is broad consensus on the fact that a proper **balance between security and development** is needed to address the challenges that converge in the Sahel region.
- The Sahel States requested **further mobilization of support** from non-Sahelian partners in order to undertake the advances in governance necessary to ensure the proper deployment of the State in their territories.
- The **integration of the Tuareg** in the Sahelian States is not a threat to their stability, but the result of the social imbalances linked to underdevelopment and distribution of wealth.
- The **trafficking in small arms and light weapons (SALW)** in the region and the **growing traffic of heavy weapons from the Libyan conflict**, and their appropriation by AQIM, as well as the instability that the aforementioned conflict could cause throughout the Sahel, are issues of great concern for the entire International Community.

### SESSION 2:

- **Regional cooperation** between Sahel States ("pays du champ") is essential in finding common solutions to problems in the region. The recent ministerial meetings between the four countries of the Sahel and the High Level Conference to be held in Algiers next September are a very positive step in this direction.
- **Prevention and anticipation** are key aspects in effectively combating terrorism.
- **Ownership** on behalf Sahel States of their **own security** is the only sustainable way to combat the threats of terrorism and organized crime in the region. Non-Sahelian actors should seek to adhere to the specific needs of Sahelian countries.

### SESSION 3:

- For Non-Sahelian actors to be more effective in their support to countries of the region, it is necessary that these continue to **make progress in defining their common strategy**. The High Level Meeting in Algiers in September 2011 is a good opportunity to build on this common strategy.



- The **role of the UN and the AU**, organizations with extensive experience in the field of peace and security in Africa and the fight against terrorism and organized crime, can be very valuable in searching for synergies between countries in the region.
- The **lack of intelligence** needed to meet the challenge of terrorism is a field in which Sahel States require added support from Non-Sahelian actors.