Mauritania has been actively engaged within the framework of the NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme since 2007.

The NATO SPS Programme enables close collaboration on issues of common interest to enhance the security of NATO and partner nations by facilitating international efforts to meet emerging security challenges, supporting NATO-led operations and missions, and advancing early warning and forecasting for the prevention of disasters and crises.

The current SPS Key Priorities include:

- Counter-Terrorism;
- Energy Security;
- Cyber Defence;
- Defence against CBRN Agents;
- Environmental Security;
- Security-related Advanced Technology;
- Border and Port Security;
- Human and Social Aspects of Security.

Additionally, the SPS Programme helps to promote regional security through scientific cooperation among partners. The Programme also helps to prepare interested eligible nations for NATO membership. SPS activities often have a high public diplomacy value.

SET-UP OF A NATIONAL OPERATIONAL COORDINATION CENTRE

In 2012, the set-up of a National Operational Coordination Centre in Nouakchott was initiated in order to improve national responses to emergencies by developing regulatory standards and operational procedures; enhancing coordination between national, regional and local levels and strengthening capabilities for analysing risks and threats. More broadly, the Centre supports the establishment of a national civil emergency planning framework. In 2014, Allies approved the second phase of the project, which aims at completing the Mauritanian Crisis Management System for more effective responses to the various risks and threats the country faces. The extension of the project finalized the territorial coverage by connecting the remaining three regions, and reaching out to partially isolated areas liable to fall under the influence of terrorist or extremist organizations.

The Centre was inaugurated in January 2015 and will reduce vulnerability to risks and threats associated with terrorist or illicit activity, particularly in isolated areas, through increased coordination between the various national civil protection and emergency response actors. In October 2017, civil emergency protection experts from Mauritania

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received three final training sessions in France. This SPS flagship project has now been completed and the resulting crisis management centre is seen as an example for the wider Sahel region. *This project was led by Mauritania and France and supported by Canada* [ref. G4451].

**DEsertification Observatory for Environmental and Socio-economic sustainability**

This Multi-Year Project (MYP) was launched in 2011. The project aimed to improve access to, and the use of, remote sensing, geographical information systems (GIS) and modelling technology for climate trends and desertification assessment and monitoring. A centralised observatory on climate trends and desertification was established to enhance knowledge and monitoring of the territory, and to manage and implement adaptation and mitigation strategies. *This project was led by experts from Mauritania and Italy* [ref. G3611].

**SAhara Trade Winds To Hydrogen: Applied Research For Sustainable Energy Systems**

Initiated in 2007 and completed in 2012, this MYP aimed to develop research platforms to initiate a comprehensive program to integrate sources of renewable energies – notably wind energy – into the grid infrastructures of the Saharan-Sahel region. *This project was led by experts from Mauritania, Morocco, Germany, France, Turkey and the United States.* [ref. G2620].

**Future SPS Activities with Mauritania**

The Science for Peace and Security Programme is open to all activities with Mauritania, in line with the political guidance from Allies in the form of the 2012 SPS Key Priorities and the 2013 Overarching Guidelines, and with Mauritania’s national priorities. In March 2018, the SPS Programme hosted a high-level meeting with experts from Mauritania, France and Romania to explore a potential future project in the area of civil emergency.

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**The Mediterranean Dialogue**

NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) was initiated in 1994 by the North Atlantic Council (NAC). It currently involves seven non-NATO countries of the Mediterranean region: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia. The Mediterranean Dialogue reflects the Alliance’s view that security in Europe is closely linked to security and stability in the Mediterranean. It is an integral part of NATO’s adaptation to the post-Cold War security environment, as well as an important component of the Alliance’s policy of outreach and cooperation.

The Mediterranean Dialogue’s overall aim is to:

- Contribute to regional security and stability;
- Achieve better mutual understanding;
- Dispel any misconceptions about NATO among MD countries.

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