Minister Florence Parly is France’s Minister of the Armed Forces. She has served in this position since 2017 under President Emmanuel Macron. From 1991 to 1993, she was a junior advisor in the Ministry of Public Service, then in the Ministry of Housing and Equipment, and finally in the Ministry of the Interior. In 1993, she returned to the administrative sector where she was appointed as Head, Protection and Social Security Office in the Budget Directorate, then for housing, equipment, city and urban planning (1994-1995), and finally for culture and audiovisual matters (1995-1997). In 1997, she served as Advisor for budget affairs in Prime Minister Lionel Jospin's Office. She was then appointed Secretary of State for Budget in 2000, a post she vacated in 2002. After her Government career, Florence Parly took on the responsibilities of Mission Head in the France Trésor Agency (2003 – 2004), before becoming Chairwoman of the board, Regional Development Agency of Ile-de-France, until 2006. She then chose to work with national companies and joined France’s largest industrial and transport corporations. In 2006 she joined Air France and took up the position of Director for Investment Strategy (2006-2008), then Deputy Director General in charge of Cargo (2008-2012), before becoming Deputy Director General in charge of short-haul activities (Orly and Escales France) in 2013. Florence Parly joined SNCF in 2014, first as Assistant Director General, then as Director General, "SNCF Voyageurs", in 2016. On the 21st June 2017, Florence Parly was appointed Minister for the Armed Forces.
Torge Gerlach (Opening Remarks)
Chief Executive Officer, DT Global

Torge Gerlach is the Chief Executive Officer of DT Global, where he oversees the company’s global operations. Torge coordinates all aspects of the company’s performance, including operational, financial, strategic, marketing, and global cross-collaboration, while maximizing stakeholder engagement and client satisfaction. An international development professional for over thirty years, Torge previously worked with AECOM for eleven of those years, serving most recently as the President of AECOM’s US-based international development business unit for four years. Previously, he held senior executive positions including the role of Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer with AECOM and one of its legacy companies that he co-founded in 1986, The Services Group. Early in his career, Torge served as an advisor on World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and USAID-funded programs on economic growth, private sector development, export diversification and promotion, and institutional capacity building and strengthening. His over-thirty years of hands-on experience in more than 60 countries across the globe provide a diverse and rich experience base on which Torge draws in his executive management role.

Ambassador Ángel Losada Fernandez (Panelist)
EU Special Representative to the Sahel

Ambassador Ángel Losada Fernandez is the European Union (EU) Special Representative to the Sahel, having served in this position since his appointment in 2015. Prior to this, he served as Spanish Ambassador at Large for the Sahel as well as Special Envoy for Libya. Ambassador Losada was also Spanish Ambassador to Kuwait and Bahrain between 2011 and 2014 as well as Ambassador to Nigeria, the Republic of Benin, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) between 2006 and 2011. Before that, Ambassador Losada worked as Senior
Advisor in the Cabinet of Spanish Secretary of State for International Cooperation as well as Ambassador at Large in the Command Structure of ISAF in Afghanistan. Prior to that Ambassador Losada worked as Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of Spain in Cuba as well as Counsellor at the Permanent Representation of Spain to NATO in Brussels. Ambassador Losada also served as Deputy Director General for United Nations Specialised Organisation and Development in the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ambassador Losada also worked as Counsellor at the Permanent Representation of Spain to the United Nations in Geneva (Switzerland), First Secretary at the Embassy of Spain in Chile, and Second Secretary at the Embassy of Spain in Addis Ababa. Before joining the Spanish Diplomatic Career, Ambassador Losada worked as an international civil servant in NATO, in the Human Rights Division of the United Nations, and in the International Labour Organization. He holds a Diploma in International Studies from the Spanish Diplomatic School, a degree in Law from the University of Navarra, and a diploma in International Law from the City of London Polytechnic School.

Ambassador Maman Sidikou (Panelist)
Executive Secretary, G5 Sahel

Ambassador Maman Sidikou is the Executive Secretary (previously “Permanent Secretary”) of the G5 Sahel. He has served in these roles since February 2018, when G5 Sahel leaders appointed him at the G5 Sahel Summit in Niamey, Niger. Prior to that, Ambassador Sidikou served as the United Nations Secretary-General’s Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) from October 2015 until January 2018. He also worked for the African Union as its special representative for Somalia and as head of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Within Niger, Ambassador Sidikou worked for Niger’s civil service including as head of the national television (1979-1981), the Prime Minister’s chief of staff (1983), and Minister of Foreign Affairs and African Integration (1997-1999) and then became the director of the president’s cabinet. Until 2011, he occupied various positions in the development sector. He worked for the World Bank (United States), UNICEF (Afghanistan, Iraq office in Jordan, and Nigeria) and Save the Children (Rwanda, DRC). A journalist by training (Dakar, Paris, Montréal), Ambassador Sidikou also holds a degree in political science (Madrid) and a PhD in education (United States).
Ambassador J. Peter Pham is the United States Special Envoy to the Sahel Region of Africa. Special Envoy Pham is responsible for coordinating America’s engagement with international and regional partners, including the G5 Sahel and ECOWAS member states, to address the threat from Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs) and prevent the VEO threat from impacting additional areas, as well as supporting the implementation of the Algiers Accord and regional efforts to stabilize the tri-border region of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. Special Envoy Pham previously served from 2018 to 2020 as U.S. Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region of Africa. Prior to his appointment to the State Department, Dr. Pham was Vice President and Director of the Africa Center at the Atlantic Council. He was previously Senior Vice President of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy, and Editor of its bimonthly journal, American Foreign Policy Interests. From 2008 to 2017, Dr. Pham was Vice President of the Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa (ASMEIA), an academic organization which represents more than 1,300 scholars of Middle Eastern and African Studies at more than 300 colleges and universities in the United States and overseas.

Judd Devermont is the director of the Africa Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Prior to joining CSIS, he served as the national intelligence officer for Africa from
2015 to 2018. In this position, he led the U.S. intelligence community’s analytic efforts on sub-Saharan African issues and served as the DNI’s personal representative at interagency policy meetings. From 2013 to 2015, he was the Central Intelligence Agency’s senior political analyst on sub-Saharan Africa. Mr. Devermont also served as the National Security Council director for Somalia, Nigeria, the Sahel, and the African Union from 2011 to 2013. In this role, he contributed to the U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa, signed by President Obama in 2012, and managed the process that resulted in U.S. recognition of the Somali government for the first time since 1991. Mr. Devermont spent two years abroad working at the U.S. Embassy in Abuja, Nigeria from 2008 to 2010.