

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, September 12 (Infosplusgabon) - Burkina Faso's head of state, Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, has stressed the urgent need to promote a new ecological balance in the Sahel and West Africa.

"There is an urgent need to promote a new ecological balance in the Sahel and West Africa, including coordination and harmonization of strategies, strengthening scientific and technical cooperation, capitalizing on experiences, dissemination of information and the strengthening of the capacity of the various actors," President Kaboré, who is also the current chairman of the Inter-State Committee for Drought in the Sahel (CILSS) said on Thursday in Ouagadougou on the occasion of the 34th CILSS Day.

"Increasing land productivity by promoting innovative solutions to combat silting and pollution of watercourses in the Sahel and West Africa" is the theme chosen by the Sahel and West African community for the commemoration of the Day.

President Kaboré said the choice of the theme reflects the desire to mobilise all energies to face the major threats to water resources in the CILSS space.

He recalled that most agricultural irrigation is done in this region around major arteries and basins consisting mainly of the Niger River, Lake Chad, the Senegal River, the Volta Basin and

the Comoé in Cote d'Ivoire.

"For the people of our space, these watercourses represent an immense wealth that allows millions of people to live from the activities of fishing, agriculture, trade and industry," President Kaboré stressed.

However, he noted, the phenomenon of silting, sewage and disposal of industrial waste, the spread of invasive aquatic plants and a declining overall rainfall are gradually reducing farmers' access to water resources.

Recurrent climatic droughts over the past three decades and high population pressure have also led to unprecedented degradation of the basin environment.

"It is thus clear that, without ongoing consultation between all countries sharing the common resources of the basins and effective coordination of their actions, the challenge of sustainable socio-economic development of populations will be very difficult to meet," President Kaboré warned.

Mr. Kaboré recalled that the day takes place in an extremely difficult context of vulnerability that has become structural and which creates a breeding ground for the development of violent extremism, terrorism and illicit trafficking of all kinds.

"These major challenges undermine peace, security and stability and dangerously jeopardise the future of our states," he warned.

He urged CILSS, in synergy with ECOWAS, to conduct broad consultation with all basin authorities in order to take stock of the shared resources and to submit to member states a proposal for an integrated regional policy for sustainable water resource management.

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