

Press release

— Casablanca, 28th November 2022 —

OCP Foundation commits, along with the Senegalese Ministry of the Environment, to Sustainable Development and Ecological Transition, in favor of the Niokolo Koba National Park.

- **OCP Foundation is supporting a sustainable development project in Senegal in order to reduce the pressure on the Niokolo Koba National Park and its resources.**
- **The project aims to support the National Parks Direction (DPN) in three complementary areas: monitoring the quality of the park's water, empowering neighboring populations and raising awareness among local communities about natural resources' preservation.**

As part of the cooperation between Morocco and Senegal and its actions carried out with communities across the African continent, OCP Foundation is supporting a sustainable development project for the Niokolo Koba National Park, located in the southeast of the country, 650 km away from Dakar in the Tambacounda Region.

The Niokolo Koba Park is an important reservoir of faunal and floral biodiversity, and with the 17 surrounding communes, the Park is subject to multiple stresses from the local residents, causing devastating effects on its natural resources, particularly water. This has led to its inclusion in UNESCO's list of World Heritage in Danger since 2007.

It is within this framework that OCP Foundation has developed a concrete partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development and Ecological Transition of Senegal in order to reduce the pressure on the park and its resources. Launched in 2021, for a period of three years, the project aims to support the National Parks Direction (DPN) in three complementary areas: (i) monitoring the quality of the park's water - through the provision of equipment and capacity building for managers and agents, (ii) empowering local communities by developing income-generating activities for women, as well as (iii) raising awareness among communities, particularly young people, about preserving the environment for the well-being of future generations.

As part of the first component, OCP Foundation relied on the expertise of the Mohammed VI Polytechnic University (UM6P) in Morocco to provide a training cycle on water quality control. A capacity-building program for the Ministry's managers and agents has been developed. So far, 24 participants have already benefited from training in this theme. In addition, OCP

Foundation has made available to the DPN the necessary equipment for water quality analysis. This includes a mobile laboratory, 2 pickups and 6 motorcycles, which were equipped with analysis kits for monitoring the quality of groundwater and surface water. This way, the park authorities will be able to have a better plan for monitoring the quality of the water available along the 250 km of the Gambia River, which runs through the park, and can undertake corrective measures in time.

In terms of empowerment of local populations, the partnership has enabled the implementation of an agro-ecological project based on efficient management of natural resources by allowing neighboring communities to access new sources of income, which will help to reduce gradually the pressure on the park's resources. Indeed, by using rational use of water (drip-irrigation and clean energy for pumping), the women's cooperatives benefiting from the project are able to sustainably increase agricultural yields and ensure food and nutritional security for their households. In this regard, a community diagnosis mission was organized in partnership with UM6P's Cooplaboratory in February 2022 to assess the communities' needs in terms of income generation support. As a result, 50 women benefited from a capacity-building program.

As for the last component of the partnership, the partners will soon mobilize efforts to support a «Caravan of Ambassadors» that will travel through the 17 communes surrounding the park to raise awareness among local populations about environmental issues.

This project was the first in a series of initiatives launched by OCP Foundation and the Senegalese Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development and Ecological Transition in favor of natural heritage preservation and community development in the country. Since 2022, two other initiatives have also been deployed in Senegal: a project to support the Joal Fadiouth Marine Protected Area, in collaboration with the Direction of Community Marine Protected Areas (DAMCP), which will contribute to the promotion of inclusive economic and social development of local communities and the improvement of marine and coastal biodiversity conservation in and around the marine area; and a cooperation project with the Senegalese Agency for Reforestation and the Great Green Wall «ASERGMV» for the fight against land degradation and the advance of desert, a sustainable management of natural resources and the development of Saharo-Saharan areas.

Through these initiatives, OCP Foundation fully aligns its actions with the objectives of sustainable development and mobilizes for a better future in Africa.

About OCP Foundation

Recognized to be of public utility, OCP Foundation is a Moroccan non-profit organization committed to sustainable human development in Morocco and in many other southern countries. Through an integrated approach built on social innovation, OCP Foundation strives to contribute to an inclusive socio-economic progress, skills development and knowledge dissemination. OCP Foundation uses its expertise and network of partners to co-build

sustainable and impactful solutions that meet the priority needs of the communities it serves. Furthermore, the Foundation adopts an agile action model based on collective intelligence and operates in different fields such as Education, and Research & Development, among others.

OCP Foundation implements a number of projects and promote innovative approaches in partnership with Moroccan institutions and other national and international organizations to stimulate and sustain the creation of shared value.

Through its promotion of a knowledge ecosystem, OCP Foundation is also proud to support the Mohammed VI Polytechnic University and the Lycée Mohammed VI d'Excellence of Benguerir.

For more information: [**www.ocpfoundation.org**](http://www.ocpfoundation.org)