

WORLD DAY TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT

THE SAHEL'S TREES OF LIFE

When local resources restore the land and sustain its territories

The acacia gum value chain

Wednesday 17 June 2026 — Serres d'Auteuil, Paris

On 17 June 2026, to mark the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, **A Better Life by SOS SAHEL**, the City of Paris and the Botanical Gardens of Paris invite you to the Serres d'Auteuil for a day devoted to Sahelian solutions.

This gathering is part of a partnership spanning more than twenty years around the Sahel Greenhouse, dedicated to the plants of Africa's dry zones. In 2026, this bond reaches a new milestone with the official inauguration of the new Sahel Greenhouse — a living space for discovery, transmission and awareness of Sahelian biodiversity.

For about two weeks, the “Trees of Life” exhibition, created by photographer Nicolas Henry with the support of Nexira, will also be on view at the Serres d'Auteuil. Set in Chad and Senegal, it portrays trees that are essential to people, animals and ecosystems. Through these images, visitors will discover plants that nourish, protect, heal, inspire and sustain local economies.

AT THE HEART OF THE DAY · ACACIA GUM

A panel discussion will spotlight an emblematic resource: acacia gum. Drawn from acacia trees, it goes into countless everyday products — food, beverages, cosmetics, health. Behind this discreet ingredient lies a value chain that connects rural African communities to international markets, while contributing to land restoration, the protection of biodiversity and the creation of income.

At the Serres d'Auteuil, the day will bring botany, climate, food, culture and entrepreneurship into dialogue. It offers the public a rare chance to discover the Sahel differently: its trees, its resources, its women and men, its value chains of the future and its capacity to inspire lasting answers for the world.



EVENT — 17 JUNE 2026



JARDIN
BOTANIQUE
DE PARIS

ARBORETUM
PARC FLORAL
PARC DE BAGATELLE
SERRES D'AUTEUIL

PROGRAMME

A PROGRAMME IN SEVERAL MOVEMENTS — TO RAISE AWARENESS, SHARE AND MOBILISE

GENERAL PUBLIC

10:00 – 18:30 A MARKETPLACE OF SAHELIAN PRODUCTS

What if fonio, baobab or millet became the ingredients of tomorrow? Five women entrepreneurs from the African diaspora will show how they are reinventing the uses of these ancestral plants to create sustainable, innovative and flavourful products.

10:00 – 11:30 & 14:00 – 15:30 SENSORY TREASURE HUNT AND GREENHOUSE VISIT FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

An immersive game designed to awaken the senses and curiosity of school groups around four emblematic Sahelian plants: fonio, shea, baobab and acacia. Through sensory workshops, riddles, products to touch and images to observe, children are invited to discover the usefulness, benefits and resilience of these species while being introduced to the challenges of desertification. A playful, hands-on approach that turns environmental awareness into an active and memorable moment of discovery.

16:00 – 16:45 LIVING TRADITIONS OF THE SAHEL, WITH GRIOT BOUBACAR NDIAYE

Boubacar Ndiaye is one of the great contemporary figures of West African oral tradition. Heir to knowledge passed down through generations, he carries on with talent the art of the griots — keepers of collective memory who, for centuries, have told the history of peoples, transmitted values and knowledge, and kept African cultural heritage alive.

11:45 – 12:45 & 13:45 – 14:30 GUIDED TOURS OF THE SAHEL GREENHOUSE

Step into the plant world of the region through a guided tour of the Sahel Greenhouse, created in 2003 thanks to the partnership between SOS SAHEL and the City of Paris.

INSTITUTIONAL

17:00 – 18:15 PANEL DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION OF THE “TREES OF LIFE” EXHIBITION

The panel will invite a change of perspective on Sahelian resources, showing how responsible value chains can restore the land, support communities and create value locally. We will focus on the model of acacia gum. This exchange will echo the “Trees of Life” exhibition, which highlights Sahelian trees as vital presences — at once resources, cultural landmarks and allies in the face of desertification.

18:15 – 18:30 INAUGURATION OF THE SAHEL GREENHOUSE

The inauguration of the new Sahel Greenhouse marked an important milestone in the partnership between A Better Life by SOS SAHEL, the City of Paris and the Botanical Garden of Paris. Conceived as a place of discovery and transmission, it invites the public to better understand the plants, landscapes and know-how of dry zones, and their essential role in the face of desertification.

18:30 – 19:30 SAHELIAN COCKTAIL RECEPTION BY ANTO COCAGNE

Following the inauguration, guests were welcomed for a cocktail served in the midst of the “Trees of Life” exhibition. A seasoned chef of Gabonese origin, Anto Cocagne is a graduate of the Ferrandi school in Paris as well as the prestigious Culinary Arts School in the United States. Trained alongside Michelin-starred chefs, she has carved out her own path, delivering a contemporary, accessible and deeply rooted African cuisine. Artistic director of the magazine Afro Cooking and founder of the We Eat Africa festival, she is a leading ambassador of African flavours. She offered an original tasting experience built on Sahelian products such as fonio and moringa, showing that these plants are also sources of pleasure, creativity and transmission.

