



HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON THE LAKE CHAD REGION

23-24 JANUARY 2023

#LakeChadNiamey



Preliminary Considerations for a 3rd Lake Chad Conference

1. Background

- The Lake Chad region is one of the world's most protracted conflict and crisis environments. Despite some positive developments, high levels of violence continue to have a devastating impact on millions of people in Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. After nearly 13 years of conflict, armed groups continue to spread violence and 11 million people are in need of wide-ranging assistance. Some 5.6 million people are expected to be severely food insecure during the 2022 lean season – the highest figure in four years. Furthermore, 2.9 million people are internally displaced (IDPs), including 2 million in Nigeria alone.
- With a view to addressing the multidimensional crisis in the Lake Chad Basin, riparian governments and the international community convened at the High-Level Conferences in Oslo (2017) and Berlin (2018) to coordinate and streamline their engagement in the region. Germany, Norway and the United Nations (OCHA/UNDP) are the standing conference co-hosts. This high-level conference cycle is complemented at the subnational level by meetings of the *Governors' Forum for Regional Cooperation on Stabilisation, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development*.
- The *Lake Chad Basin Commission* and the *African Union* endorsed a „*Regional Strategy for the Stabilisation, Recovery and Resilience of the Boko Haram-affect areas of the Lake Chad Basin Region*“ (RSS) in 2018. It provides a regional, African-led coordination and engagement mechanism and is backed by an *International Support Group* comprising 13 international partners. In addition, annual *Humanitarian Response Plans* and the *Abuja Action Statements* adopted by Governments in 2016 and 2019 provide an overarching framework for the provision of prioritised humanitarian action in line with humanitarian principles and for strengthening linkages between humanitarian, stabilisation and development efforts.

2. Current dynamics in the Lake Chad Basin's political and operational environment

- The prevailing multi-faceted and protracted regional crisis characterised by contested sovereignty, fragile governance mechanisms, forced displacement, food insecurity, reduced access to essential basic services and protection challenges continue to overwhelm existing local and national capacities and available international funding.
- Increasing impacts of climate change and conflict dynamics interact in a vicious circle in the region where climate change impacts feed additional pressures and tensions while conflict undermines communities' abilities to cope and adapt.

- Under riparian Governments' direction, the growing significance of community self-defence groups in the provision of local security and the accelerating surrenders of persons associated with Boko Haram place exceeding pressure on existing DDR/4DR¹ and SPRR² structures and processes which need to be further supported and shored up.
- A more effective and sufficiently resourced nexus approach strengthening the links between humanitarian, development, stabilisation and peace efforts is required to prevent the crisis from worsening and new catastrophes (e.g. food insecurity) from unfolding.
- With preliminary stabilisation progress in selected areas formerly controlled by violent extremist groups, demands for an enhanced political dialogue and engagement of key actors in the region have come to the forefront. Key political actors and decision-makers in the region in particular opine that the international engagement in support of durable solutions, managing the impact of mass populations movements, - and medium-/long-term development should be scaled up (e.g. Yaoundé 2021 Governors' Forum).

3. Rationale for 3rd Lake Chad Conference

- These dynamics shaping the Lake Chad Basin environment necessitate the continuous international, regional, national and subnational engagement in the region to adapt and evolve in a focused, coherent and coordinated fashion. The high-level Lake Chad conference cycle is a critical international political forum able to facilitate a regional, cross-border consensus around the required adjustments for effectively dealing with the prevailing multi-faceted challenges in the region. Therefore, it is time to call a 3rd Lake Chad Conference.
- Instructive guiding principles for a 3rd Lake Chad Conference might be:
 - anchoring African ownership in a regionally coordinated, joint-up response within the framework of the LCBC/AU RSS and its implementation in line with principled, UN coordinated humanitarian assistance;
 - reinforcing the *Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus* within a One UN framework, at this stage with a special emphasis on greater complementarity between humanitarian, stabilisation and development actors, including
 - fostering dialogue between humanitarian, stabilisation and development actors to better identify common opportunities to promote the nexus and identify areas prone to implementing

¹ Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) / Disengagement, Disarmament, Demobilisation, De-radicalisation and Re-integration (4DR).

² Screening, Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (SPRR).

sustainable solutions, leveraging comparative advantages and in line with each pillar's areas of expertise.

- sharing good practices and models (such as the regional stabilisation facility), challenges and opportunities on promoting stabilisation in the Lake Chad Basin context;
 - strengthening the coordination between humanitarian and stabilisation actors for greater advancement of *durable solutions*, in particular with a view to achieving durable, voluntary, safe and dignified returns of IDPs in accordance with international law (specifically the Kampala Convention and UN Secretary General's Action Agenda on internal displacement with its focus on ensuring that IDPs find a durable solution to their displacement, on prevention of new displacement and on ensuring that those facing displacement receive effective protection and assistance);
 - charting a sequential path to sustainable development in areas sufficiently stabilised;
- improving access for humanitarian assistance to all populations in need and promoting respect for international humanitarian law
 - reinvigorating and streamlining reintegration and reconciliation efforts across the region;
 - developing pathways to addressing the issue of community self-defence groups;
 - addressing adverse impacts of climate change as part of peacebuilding and humanitarian efforts.

4. Conference arrangements

- Location/timing: 23. – 24. January 2022 in Niamey, Niger
- Co-host arrangements: The standing co-chairs Germany, Norway, the United Nations (OCHA/UNDP) joined by Niger as the riparian host. The other riparian states (Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria), LCBC, AU, Humanitarian/Resident Coordinators in the four countries and international partners, particularly, UK and Sweden as current and former RSS International Support Group co-chairs play a leading role as co-sponsors and co-convenors of conference panels/themes.
- Panel format: Panel topics are to reflect a forward looking nexus-approach from an interagency/systems-thinking and solutions perspective rather than featuring single-issue discussions. While this is intended to be a Ministerial-level conference, the aim is to also bring other core partners such as civil society organisations.