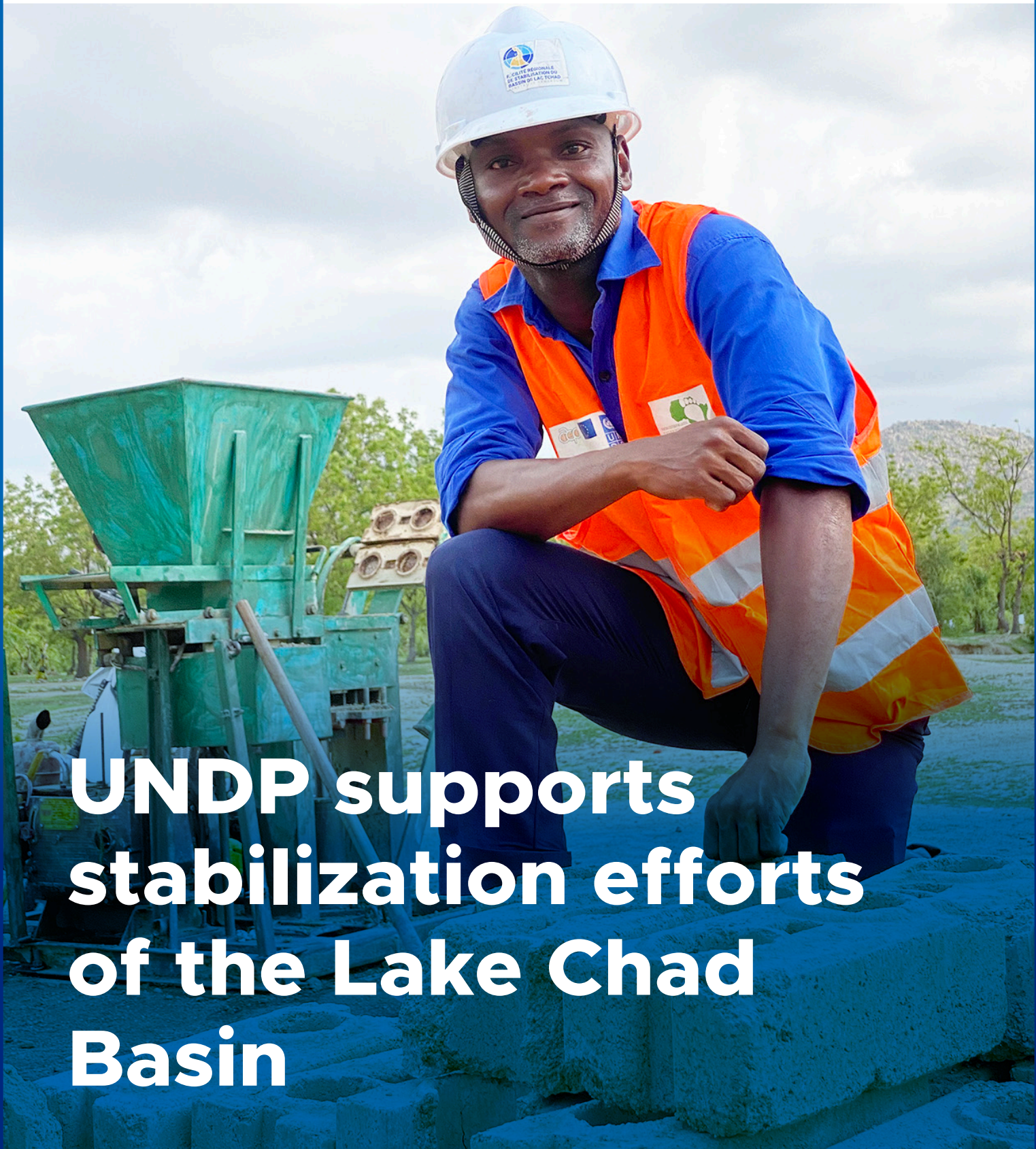


# UNDP in Action

A quarterly publication of the United Nations Development Programme in Cameroon



**UNDP supports  
stabilization efforts  
of the Lake Chad  
Basin**



## UNDP, Partners Validate Extension of the Regional Stabilization Facility for the Lake Chad Basin

Yaoundé, 21st August 2021 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have validated the extension of the Regional Stabilization Facility (RSF) in support of implementing the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience (RSS) of the Boko Haram affected areas of the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) Region – Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria.



Stabilization team from Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal, Ethiopia pose for family photograph after an internal meeting in Yaounde

The facility consisting of funding from Germany, Sweden, the European Union (EU), the United Kingdom (UK), the Netherlands, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and France, provides a novel approach calibrated to respond to immediate challenges of governance, insecurity, the rule of law, human security, and livelihood in the Lake Chad Basin. It responds to the need for a step-change in the scale and nature of interventions, the speed of response, increased territorial coverage, and improved regional cooperation.

The official validation of the facility was done at a Multiparty Consultation in Yaoundé, Cameroon and brought together Senior Level Representatives from Donor Partners, the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), the African Union Commission (AUC), UNDP Resident Representatives, and stabilization teams working in the region.

“I wish to seize this opportunity for us to reflect on the implementation on the RSF proof of concept, define lessons learnt from the four countries, and determine a collective way forward to support the Lake Chad Basin in its fight against violent extremism,” said Jean-Luc Stalon, Resident Representative, UNDP Cameroon.

For years, countries in the Lake Chad Basin have tussled with various forms of insecurity. The region has witnessed acts of banditry, abduction, highway robbery and cattle rustling, among other challenges that have historically and collectively plagued the region. Amidst these issues, one of the most significant security challenges to confront the region remains the Boko Haram crisis. Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria have all endured the impact of this violent extremist problem that questions the state’s very existence and its capacity and willingness to provide human security. Therefore, the focus on conflict dynamics is to be understood as a critical examination of the broad spectrum of actors, structures and processes that spawn insecurity in the region while still placing centre-stage the Boko Haram phenomenon and how it connects with other conflict or security dynamics.

Over the past 18 months, the facility provided a proof-of-concept model that supported the implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience (RSS) of the Boko Haram affected areas of the Lake Chad Basin Region which shaped stabilization activities in the region for the past two years.



*Participants pose for family photograph at the end of the Multiparty Consultation on the RSF in Yaounde.*

Despite deteriorating security situations and the COVID-19 pandemic, progress has been made across the four-country windows as well as capacity support to the LCBC. Overall, 15 Joint Action Plans (JAPs) have been implemented, leading to the strengthening of security architectures, the rehabilitation of essential infrastructure and basic services, and the provision of livelihood opportunities critical to achieving stability in target communities. Additionally, 13 Community Stabilization Committees were created to address community security challenges, including structural agreements and actions to strengthen civil-military coordination, all necessary to rebuild the social contract.

The extension of the facility leverages the experience and successes of the past 18 months in target communities and ushers in a reinforced approach informed by experiences on the ground. This extension proposes that stabilization programme should be primarily delivered with speed, at scale, and build the social contract to align with a conflict-sensitive approach to stabilization programming.

Speaking on what the extension and validation means for the Lake Chad Basin, Njoya Tikum, Manager, UNDP Sub-Regional Hub for West and Central Africa, stated, “with this extension, we have an opportunity to consolidate on the momentum gained over the past 18 months which has taught us what works and what does not with regards to stabilizing the Lake Chad Basin. We are employing a very flexible approach to deliver at scale, with speed and with a focus on building the social contract – allowing us to lay the

groundwork for sustained peace.”

During the high-level consultations, RSF Donor Partners reaffirmed their commitment to extending the facility while highlighting the need for improved collaboration with other development actors and recognizing the role of CSOs, women, and youth in driving the LCBC stabilization strategy’s success.

Working in complementarity with other actors in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus will ensure the smooth implementation of the LCBC regional strategy. Speaking on this, Ambassador Mamman Nuhu, Executive Secretary Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and Head of Mission Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), stated, “Results from the RSF have been impressive. This points to the importance of scale and the need for the gains of RSF to be consolidated and sustained by governments and other HDP actors in the field. Therefore, there is a need for RSF to reach out to other partners at the local level, and both UN and UN-entities.”

UNDP first launched the facility at the 2019 Governors’ Forum for Regional Cooperation on Stabilization, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development, and the upcoming 2021 Governor’s Forum is scheduled to hold in Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 4th to 5th October will build on the gains achieved so far. ■



Next Generation UNDP Resident Representatives from Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, and Chad. Brains behind the success of RSF



African Union 



# 3<sup>EME</sup> REUNION DU FORUM DES GOUVERNEURS DU BASSIN DU LAC TCHAD

Coopération régionale en matière de stabilisation, de consolidation de la paix et de développement durable

4-5  
OCT 2021





## Amchide and Banki are getting back to normalcy

The Resident Representatives of UNDP Cameroon and Nigeria, Jean-Luc Stalon and Mohamed Yahya carried out a joint mission in May 2021 to visit and make an evaluation of the impacts of the ongoing cross-border Stabilization initiatives in both Cameroon and Nigeria as part of UNDP's Lake Chad Stabilization Facility.

Both dignitaries expressed satisfaction as they realized that life and cross-border trade are gradually getting back to normalcy in the towns of Amchide in the Far North Region of Cameroon and Banki in North East of Nigeria, thanks to the impacts of the Regional Stabilization Facility of the Lake Chad Basin.

In Amchedi and Banki, the Resident Representatives visited completed projects and structures under completion, including Schools, Police and security stations, Custom Offices, security walls, markets and many other key structures which were destroyed by the Boko Haram terrorist group. At the end of the visit, they unanimously expressed the need to scale-up projects and services and the first phase has served as a prove of concept.



Jean-Luc Stalon and Mohamed Yahya meet at the cross-border town of Banki in North East Nigeria



RR visited pupils in one of the newly constructed and refurbished class rooms in Limani.



*“This visit was a great initiative as we visited both sides and learnt lessons. Permit me emphasize a few points; first, the offer that UNDP brings with stabilization has demonstrated its full pertinence in the context that we have just seen. Military solutions alone will not resolve crises like this one. As soon as the military and government succeed to push back the terrorist group, we come in with this offer for the population. I was honored when I discovered that all what has been reconstructed in these communities are from this*

*project. The reopening of the Banki- Amchedi corridor is also key. Secondly, what we have seen today is a prove of concept that stabilization can work. This concept has to be scaled-up in the next phase of the project in order to provide support to the state and the affected populations.”*

**Dr Jean-Luc Stalon, UNDP Resident Representative,  
Cameroon**



UNDP provides portable water to inhabitants in Amchedi, Far North Region of Cameroon.





The UNDP Resident Representative of Cameroon made a brief over at the premises of the Multilateral Joint Task Force in Mora where they both discussed possible ways of enhancing collaboration

*"I have seen significant progress; I have seen the idea of stabilization works across borders. I have also seen the kind of changes that the work is bringing. My colleague Jean Luc keeps pointing at the many lorries crossing the borders and after meeting and listening to the communities, I hear the stories of hope-people feeling they can come back to their homes. Many are saying Banki is back, they feel secured, and they think that government is doing all these. This is the most important thing about stabilization, it is not about what UNDP is doing. It's about government leadership extending services and security to the affected*

*population. I am humbled, I have learnt a lot from what is being done in Cameroon I am also cognizant of what has not yet been done. More needs to be done. From what I just heard from the communities, they want more security features to be put in place, they want more solar energy etc."*

**Mohamed Yahya, UNDP Resident Representative,  
Nigeria.**





## 3<sup>ème</sup> édition du Forum des Gouverneurs du Bassin du Lac Tchad



Midjiyawa Bakary, Governor of the Far North Region ready to welcome his counterparts from Niger, Nigeria, and Chad

Le prochain forum des Gouverneurs du Bassin du Lac Tchad pour la coopération régionale sur la stabilisation, la consolidation de la paix et le développement durable se tiendra à Yaoundé, Cameroun du 4 au 5 octobre 2021. Le Forum évaluera et analysera la situation politique, civile, sécuritaire et humanitaire dans la région du Bassin du Lac Tchad. Il identifiera les domaines dans lesquels la coopération et le soutien devraient être renforcés et fournira des occasions de partager les meilleures pratiques entre les experts internationaux et les acteurs nationaux et locaux engagés dans la mise en œuvre de la Stratégie Régionale de Stabilisation.

Placé sous le Très Haut Patronage de S.E.M le Président de la République du Cameroun, représenté par S.E.M. le Premier Ministre, le forum verra la participation d'éminentes personnalités issues de la sphère politique, des Experts des Nations Unies et de l'Union Africaine, des chercheurs, des acteurs de la société civile et des Médias. ■



# 3<sup>RD</sup> MEETING OF THE LAKE CHAD BASIN GOVERNORS' FORUM

Regional Cooperation on Stabilization,  
Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development

4-5  
OCT 2021







## Minerais de développement à l'Extrême-Nord. Le PNUD équipe les producteurs locaux

Ils ont reçu vendredi 16 juillet 2021 dernier à travers le MINIMIDT un don en matériels devant les aider à améliorer les conditions de travail sur le terrain.



La remise symbolique des dons aux artisans de l'exploitation des minerais de développement.

Dans le monde des mines, il y a beaucoup d'argent qui se perd de suite de négligence ou de l'ignorance tout simplement. Les minéraux de développement, c'est-à-dire les matériaux locaux tels que l'argile, le sable, le gravier, la latérite et bien d'autres engrangent des bénéfiques inconnus, mais malheureusement mal connus. Les artisans dans ce secteur sont très souvent abandonnés à eux-mêmes, pourtant le travail qu'ils abattent contribue efficacement au développement local, explique Paul Mbarbé, le délégué régional du Ministère de l'Industrie, des Mines et du Développement Technologique de l'Extrême-Nord (Minimidt).

Or, mieux structuré, le cadre opérationnel de gestion des minéraux de développement pourrait générer davantage des dividendes. Selon le constat fait sur le terrain, le manque de capacité technique de coordination et d'exploitation en sont des véritables freins. Pourtant au Cameroun, et particulièrement dans la région de l'Extrême-Nord, ce n'est pas le potentiel qui manque, il existe en quantité et en qualité énorme, mais il reste mal exploité. Non seulement cette exploitation est archaïque, mais elle est faite dans

un contexte plein de risques. Parfois il arrive que les producteurs en meurent. On se rappelle du décès d'une jeune fille de 15 ans à Maroua, décédée il y a quelques mois suite à l'effondrement d'une grotte alors que cette dernière cherchait à rassembler du gravier.

C'est pour améliorer donc ce secteur que le Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement a décidé d'offrir aux artisans de l'Extrême-Nord du matériel d'exploration des minéraux de développement dans le cadre de son projet « small grants et matériel protection Covid 19 » financé par ACP-UE. Il s'agit des perforateurs, des groupes électrogènes, des pioches, concasseur artisanal mobile,... C'était au cours d'une cérémonie très courue à Maroua vendredi 16 juillet 2021. Pour les bénéficiaires ce don du PNUD vient comme une manne qui tombe du ciel, parce qu'il était non seulement attendu, mais « il va nous permettre d'améliorer nos conditions de travail et par ricochet booster notre production », affirme Hawaou responsable de l'entreprise Youth center for lasting peace and development basée à Mora.

Par Joël MAMAN



## Youth in Mora hail UNDP for “life-saving” machine



*Mahamat Aoudi, beneficiary who gained employment as a Civil Servant*

The United Nations Development Programme, UNDP Cameroon through the ACP Small Grant project, in partnership with a Youth association based in Mora-Youth Center for Sustainable Peace and Development have supported youth in the crises affected Region of the Far North of Cameroon with a machine which produces compressed earth blocks from Laterite and Clay, thereby reducing the cost of construction by 40% in the region.

The machine which produces 300 to 400 earth blocks per day has already provided close to 30 permanent and temporal employment to youth in the locality. It has also produced bricks used in the reconstruction and construction of over ten structures (schools, markets, private houses, Government Offices) in the areas of Limani, Amchidi, Kolofata, Meri and Mora.

“This machine is a welcome relief to us. Bricks produced from this machine do not only reduce the construction cost, but also serve as bullet proofs, reduces heat and replaces cement especially during periods when borders with Nigeria are closed due to the security crises”, explained Ibrahim Djagra, Founding member of the local youth association.

Mahamat Aoudi is one of the successful beneficiaries of this project who strongly holds that this project helped him to become a civil servant. “This project has been a great support to me. Before this machine was donated to us, I was jobless. I used income generated from this machine to enroll for public competitive entrance examinations into the Teachers training college. Today, I am a Civil Servant. I teach in Bamenda, Northwest Region” ■





## Réduction de la pauvreté. Le MINEPAT et le PNUD accordent des appuis en équipements aux jeunes porteurs de projets innovants de Bibémi



Les jeunes porteurs de projets innovants de cette commune du département de la Bénoué ont reçu le 3 juin 2021, un important appui en équipement de la part du gouvernement camerounais soutenu par le Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement (PNUD). La même cérémonie a servi de cadre à la remise des équipements au Bureau d'Emploi Municipal mis en place par le Projet d'Appui à la Résilience Economique (PAREC) et au renforcement de la chaîne de valeur de la filière maïs.

La pauvreté est l'un des fléaux qui menace fortement la jeunesse camerounaise surtout celles des zones rurales. Soucieux des conséquences que peut générer une telle situation, le gouvernement camerounais à travers le ministère de l'Economie, de la Planification

et de l'Aménagement du Territoire (MINEPAT) a mis en place le Projet d'Appui à la Résilience Economique en abrégé PAREC, qui se fonde sur les acquis du Sous-Programme de Réduction de la Pauvreté à la base phase II. Une initiative soutenue par le Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement (PNUD) avec l'appui d'autres administrations partenaires que sont : le Ministère de la Jeunesse, le Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Formation professionnelle, le Ministère du Commerce, le Ministère des Finances, le Ministère de la Décentralisation et du Développement local.

Créer des conditions favorables à l'employabilité des jeunes et des femmes à travers de mécanismes visant à promouvoir l'entreprenariat local ; promouvoir l'inclusion et la diversification de l'économie locale

à travers la valorisation des produits locaux et la mise en marché... sont entre autres missions de ce projet.

Pour le cas spécifique de Bibémi, 17 organisations de producteurs ont bénéficié des intrants agricoles (engrais et urée) afin de renforcer la chaîne de valeurs maïs soit 17 sacs d'engrais et 10 sacs d'urée pour chaque groupe. S'agissant des jeunes porteurs de projets innovants, un groupe de trois jeunes filles a bénéficié des équipements pour un atelier de couture. On y compte une machine à coudre avec pédales, une autre à broder, une machine à surfiler, une machine fait tout. Une boutonnière, un fer à repasser, une table de coupe et une plaque solaire pour palier aux coupures de courant électrique. Prenant la parole lors cette cérémonie très courue, le Maire de la Commune de Bibémi Armand



YEDI, a remercié le gouvernement camerounais à travers le MINEPAT, les administrations partenaires et surtout le Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement (PNUD). Il a souhaité que de telles initiatives se poursuivent pour permettre à Bibémi de se développer. « Pour nous, en plus de nos efforts propres, tout projet qui participe à court, moyen et long terme au développement socioéconomique

de nos populations, sera toujours la Bienvenue et aura un traitement particulier », a déclaré Armand YEDI.

Le Représentant du PNUD Monsieur Jean Vincent de Paul GWET, a rappelé que l'action de son Institution auprès du gouvernement camerounais vise à atténuer les effets de la pauvreté et des inégalités à travers divers appuis visant à renforcer la résilience des

populations. Il a exhorté les autorités communales, les communautés et groupes bénéficiaires à faire un bon usage des équipements et matériels mis à leur disposition. Il a enfin réitéré l'engagement du PNUD à toujours œuvrer aux côtés du gouvernement camerounais afin de faire « de ses populations, des communautés davantage résilientes et inclusives pour le bien-être de tous ».





## UNDP, partners create platform to fight sexual, gender based violence in crisis-hit zones

*A national platform has been set up to fight sexual, gender based violence and promote human rights in the crisis-hit regions in Cameroon. The initiative is supported by the UN Secretary General's Peace Building Fund (PBF)*



The platform was put in place at the end of a one-week workshop in Douala that brought together civil society organizations, media practitioners, the Cameroon Human Rights Commission and the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family.

Organized by the United Nations Development Programme UNDP, the workshop was aimed at reinforcing the participation of community mechanisms and boost the role of right defenders in the consolidation of peace in the North West and South West Regions.

"Our goal is to bring the various stakeholders together to ensure our response to the situation on the ground (in terms of fighting gender based violence and promoting human rights) is more visible, coordinated and to reassure survivors that we share in their pain," Julie Mballa Ebengue, National Gender and Human Rights Specialists at UNDP said.

"We want to ensure that the fight against gender based violence and human rights violations remains a top priority. Thus, the national platform will need to do a lot of advocacy and mobilize resources for this, reason why we count on the support of various stakeholders to make this work," she added.

For one week, participants shared their experiences working on the ground in the fight against gender-based violence but also developed strategies and came up with

a working document to guide concerted actions in fighting against gender based violence and promoting human rights especially in crisis-hit regions.

Closing the five-day workshop, the representative of the Minister of Women's Empowerment and the Family, Francisca Moto lauded the creation of the platform which she said is a big step in the fight against gender based violence which remains a cultural problem.

"With this platform, each and everyone will be a gender champion and it is only through such collective efforts that we can effectively stamp out gender-based violence," she said. ■





## Cameroon: National consultation to boost women’s AfCFTA participation launched

*Cameroon has launched national consultation to sample views in view of African Women in Trade Protocol Elaboration Process.*

The consultation which aims to boost and foster women’s participation in the African Continental Free Trade Agreement was launched on Wednesday, July 28 in Yaounde.

Launching the exercise were the Minister of Women’s Empowerment and the Family, Professor Marie Thérèse Abena Ondoua, representatives of the United Nations Development Programme, as well as UN Women.



The UN Resident Coordinator, Mathias Naab stressed the importance women entrepreneurs on the development of the economy.

“The importance of this consultation exercise is to gather viewpoints from women entrepreneurs nationwide and across many African countries that will inform the protocol that is supposed to be for trade and women in trade,” Mathias Naab said.

“It is important because Cameroon plays a vital role in the region and we know what Cameroonian women are made of. They are also an important part of the economy of this country. So this consultation is to gather viewpoints of all these women entrepreneurs, sit and agree on opportunities and challenges that will fit into this protocol,” he added.

On her part, the Minister of Women’s Empowerment and the Family, Prof Marie Thérèse Abena Ondoua said the project is timely because it will help reduce the inequalities suffered by women when it comes to transborder trade. ■



 	
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## Fight Against COVID-19: UNDP Donates Scanner To Government

The 64-bar equipment worth \$130,000 was handed over to the Yaounde Central Hospital on Tuesday, June 22



Dr Jean-Luc Stalon, UNDP RR hands over scanner to Dr Malachie Manaouda, Public Health Minister

Those were the words of the Head of the Radiology and Imaging Department of the Yaounde Central Hospital, Professor Ongolo Fouda as he welcomed the Minister of Public Health and the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP, into the hall where the newly acquired 64-bar scanner had been installed.

The equipment handed over by the UNDP was acquired thanks to a \$130,000-fund from the Islamic Development Bank and is intended to strengthen health care provision at the hospital. Presenting the scanner, Prof Ongola Fouda said the device is qualified as a high performance object because it is capable of making 128 slices in a fraction of a second, unlike the old two-bar scanner acquired in 2005. In addition, the quality of the images produced is very high and sharp and the device is associated with an engraver which makes it possible to manage the multiplicity of images.

In addition, to mitigate the vagaries of interruptions related to the supply of electrical energy, an energy security device makes it possible to avoid the interruption of the execution of

*“The staff of the Yaounde Central Hospital are now very confident with this equipment which will help them improve on the quality of care offered to the patients”.*

a command, he added. On his part, the UNDP Resident Representative Dr Jean Luc Stalon expressed delight on the availability of the equipment which is intended to strengthen the response against Covid-19.

“UNDP is delighted today to participate in the handover of this equipment. This is part of our response and support to the government of Cameroon to face the COVID-19 pandemic. We are particularly happy to provide this support to the Yaounde Central Hospital which is a very important medical infrastructure in the country,” Dr Jean Luc Stalon said.

“We are particularly happy that we are providing this scanner with a warranty of two years which will allow in case of any problems to have some sustainability and follow up of this equipment,” he added.

Inaugurating the equipment, the Minister of Public Health Dr Malachie

Manaouda said more scanners are on their way and will be installed at other health facilities. He added that the Yaounde Central Hospital will get an ambulance and equipped with a new generator in the days ahead while the installation of an oxygen plant is equally being envisaged. With more than 200,000 patients received per year and some 40,000 patients received in emergency situations, this health facility occupies a prominent place in the health system, reason why government is going the extra mile to provide the necessary equipment.

The Minister however recommended that the upgrading of the technical platform be accompanied by the humanization of care. It was on this recommendation that the symbolic ribbon was cut, followed by a visit to the device in question, the entire technical device and the premises that house them.

In addition to the main room which includes the brand new scanner, cabins have been fitted out and equipped with additional equipment. Two waiting areas are reserved for patients. Another space has already been reserved to accommodate a possible MRI machine. ■



## UNDP Cameroon Accelerator Lab in quest of solutions to youth unemployment

Since its official launch in February 2021, UNDP Cameroon Accelerator Lab, has been navigating its journey through its first frontier challenge: the promotion of access of youth to employment. This sector represents a priority for the government as emphasized in the 2030 National Development Strategy and its support to various related programs. Yet, all stakeholders need to increase their efforts, given some factual elements. First,



Building on the experiences of its sensing and exploration stages, the Lab identified six bottlenecks preventing the access of young Cameroonian to decent jobs: the poor quality of academic orientation, mismatch between academic curricula and market needs, difficulties to get first professional experience, the quality of information and coordination in the job market, the transparency of recruitment process and finally, limited decent job



unemployment rate among the Youth is significantly higher than for the general population (8.9% versus 5.7%). Then, it takes on average 26 months for a young Cameroonian to find a job, in a market where the informal sector represents more than 90% of jobs created .

To address this challenge, the Accelerator Lab team engaged itself in a quest to understand the factors driving unemployment and then map and experiment solutions. An exploration workshop in Douala brought together over twenty actors from the government, private sector, development partners and civil Society to understand root causes fueling unemployment amongst young graduates. Then, participation to a “Skills caravan” organized by GIZ with other stakeholders in conflict-affected North West and South West regions of Cameroon was an opportunity to take stock of the TVET ecosystem and discover the role of additional constraints plaguing access to employment, especially coordination failures. Finally, during a Solution Safari with entrepreneurs in the artisanal sector, the Lab discovered the large potential for employment generation, but also solutions that government and Country office could take up to improve youth access to entrepreneurship in the Artisanal sector. An opportunity for scale-up for the expansion of the national decoration industry.

Valorization of local resources (Raffia) to empower women and girls in the Yaounde Likalo Center: Great Potential for scale-up

opportunities. Traditional ways to address these challenges have not delivered results as fast as one would expect, especially as limited resources have to follow exponential demographic dynamics - tens of thousands of young people enter the job market annually. More recently, these challenges have been even more exacerbated by the multifaceted consequences of Covid-19.

Learning lessons from previous initiatives in this sector, the Lab designed, over the last months, a strategy aimed at testing small scale experiments targeting the six identified bottlenecks. It leveraged its mandate to mobilize local innovations to experiment some “out-of-the-box” solutions to employment issues as illustrated by three groups of experiments. First, recognizing that job search techniques are currently mastered by very few Cameroonians, especially those living in rural areas, an ongoing experiment intends to test whether gamification and social media popular among young people can help mainstream those know-how. The idea being that the sooner young people learn those techniques, the more they will develop the right reflexes and capabilities in terms of job search.

As job market coordination remains weak, the Lab is working on tools capable of better matching supply and demand, identifying tensions on the job market and increasing stakeholders’ coordination : a job market dashboard and a multi stakeholders working group in charge of coordinating strategic actions in the job market is in preparation. Finally, as employment in rural areas is





mostly found in the agriculture sector, the Lab teamed up with planters in the cocoa sector - which provides a living directly or indirectly to one fourth of the population - to find solutions to cocoa tree diseases, one of the main issues affecting their activities. In this realm, experiments range from the creation of community groups and specialized tontines to the use of drones and artificial intelligence for early detection of diseases.

All in all, preliminary results tend to support interventions in the job markets that are holistic, all along the employment value chain. They also plead in favor of grassroots and strategic institutions to streamline the functioning of the job market. Finally, they highlight that coalizing the efforts of public and private partners, local communities, civil society and development partners is the key to creating more descent employment for young job seekers. ■



Cameroon Accelerator Lab visiting the Advanced Vocational Training Center in the realm of a "Skills caravan" organized by the GIZ to take stock of curriculum requirements. Location: Limbe, Cameroon



Cameroon Accelerator Lab meeting trainees in a Vocational Training Centre in the realm of a "Skills caravan" organized by the GIZ. Location: Limbe, Cameroon





## Tropical Forest and Rural Development from Cameroon wins the Equator Prize 2021

*Empowering Indigenous communities in the Dja Biosphere Reserve in Cameroon, this community organization promotes cocoa-based agroforestry and the collection of forest products for better local incomes while protecting a vulnerable forest.*

A community-based enterprise operating around the Dja Biosphere Reserve in southern Cameroon, Tropical Forest and Rural Development is empowering Indigenous communities through cocoa-based agroforestry value chains and the collection of moabi, wild mango and other fruits. The group has planted over 70,000 trees for production and provides training in collection quality standards to obtain higher prices for food and cosmetic products. Agreements between Indigenous women collectors and government agencies secure access and use rights in the Reserve. The model's viability is proven through the avoidance of deforestation and a reduction in poaching in the communities. The initiative focuses on the economic inclusion of several Indigenous groups, some of them pursuing traditional semi-nomadic lifestyles, through access to education, the registration of community businesses, and jobs for 500 women collectors and 300 cacao producers. Tropical Forest and Rural Development maintains partnerships with several food and cosmetics wholesalers.



## Rethinking stabilization as a Unique Instrument to Counter Insurgency in Africa



At a time when the gradual disengagement of Operation Barkhane and the establishment of Takuba fuel the debate on the effectiveness of the fight against jihadist groups in the Sahel, the Liptako-Gourma area enters a phase of stabilization. While the French operation demonstrates the limits of military response against violent extremism, Stabilization programming becomes a key element for a comprehensive response. Security and development challenges must be addressed simultaneously.

### A CONTINENT FULL OF THREATS

Over the past decade, all African regions have been plagued by terrorist organizations. This regionalization concerns both the older Shabab and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the franchises and other endogenous emanations that have developed in contexts of intertwined conflicts and sources of fragility.

For a long time, terrorism carried by Islamic organizations on the African continent was perceived as the reflection of the internationalization of a civilizational struggle, or at least the Islamization of political contestation from elsewhere that has gradually spread to Africa, particularly sub-Saharan Africa. However, it is worth noting that criminal organizations also emanate from the development of groups that are essentially inclined towards the violence of local demands, the asymmetrical contestation of state governance, and the instrumentalization of social wrath in a context of saturation of needs.

The recent attack on Palma (Mozambique) is a result of the gap between the quality of life of the people and the important foreign investment in an area where underemployment, inadequate basic social services and ideological recuperation are the source of insurgency. Even the claim that the attack was carried out by the Islamic State and the possible links with the Shabab do not obviate the eminently local dimension of the sources of the violence. Indigenization thus takes place in a complex articulation of local factors, regional vectors, favorable contexts and facilitations such as access to financing and operational means. All enclaves of fragility thus become candidate zones as long as the context favors the irruption of an armed group.

#### THE LAKE CHAD BASIN AS AN OBSERVATION SITE

After years of struggle, it is clear that the large-scale operations that Boko Haram used to conduct with hundreds of men are now rare. Suicide bombings have declined considerably.

The Lake Chad Basin states (Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger, Chad) gathered within the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) to address structural issues related to the crisis. A Regional Stabilization Strategy (RSS) was developed in conjunction with the African Union (AU) and international partners including the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

More particularly, the implementation of the RSS is supported by funding under the Regional Stabilization Facility (RSF) launched in July 2019 in Niamey. The RSF is funded by the European Union, Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and France.

In the target areas of the Far North of Cameroon, UNDP has undertaken activities aimed at stabilizing areas that had been freed from Boko Haram's control, all the while remaining fragile.

The implementation of such projects has produced rapid and convincing results. Buildings for security posts, agricultural and livestock services, schools and health centers have been constructed in permanent materials to strengthen the presence of the State and its services. As part of the revitalization of the local economy, the most notable achievement is the reopening of the Banki (Nigeria) and Amchide (Cameroon) corridor, known as the lung of the cross-border economy. All of the above has substantially improved civil-military cooperation, streamlined community protection, encourages the return of internally displaced persons, reduced the risks of recruitment through income-generating activities. Stabilization gives beneficiaries the feeling that their lives are improving.

#### ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR STABILIZATION

In the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in the Lake Chad Basin, now in the Liptako-Gourma area and perhaps elsewhere, stabilization mechanisms appear to be the adequate response to bring about economic and social change that meets the expectations of the population.

In order for stabilization to achieve the objectives of sustainable transformation of conflict-affected areas and reach a critical mass of affected populations, it is necessary that concerned African countries and international partners devote substantial funds to infrastructure, social and economic development as well as reinvigorating cross-border trade in affected regions.

It is essential to break the cycle of opportunistic violence that finds its root in poverty. Geographical fragilities have created a base for wrath on which violent extremist insurrections are based. It is critical to dismantle the root cause of extremism and build societies on the basis of a new social contract.

It is therefore critical to deploy an ambitious stabilization plan with financial resources that adequately addresses the challenges to avoid acting when it is too late and too expensive!

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