

**High-Level Conference on the Lake Chad Region**  
**Concept Note on the Civil Society Segment**  
 3-4 September 2018, Berlin/Germany

*Version as of 31 August 2018*  
*Anke Wiedemann, Volker Gerdesmeier (Caritas Germany)*  
*Rüdiger Schöch (Plan International Germany)*

## **Background**

The Lake Chad crisis is among the most complex and severe humanitarian emergencies in the world with 10.8 million people in urgent need of assistance in north-east Nigeria, Cameroon's Far North, western Chad and south-east Niger. The nine-year conflict compounding the protracted crisis has displaced around 2.4 million people, with 1.8 million people displaced in north-east Nigeria alone. Food insecurity and malnutrition remain high with 5 million food-insecure people and over 490,000 children suffering from severe malnutrition.

Insecurity across the region, large scale destruction of infrastructure and risks associated with freedom of movement impede civilians from meeting their basic needs with hundreds of thousands of people remaining out of the purview of humanitarian assistance and protection, with actors unable to verify their conditions. This is a protection crisis with women, girls, men and boys subjected to ongoing human rights abuses by all parties to the conflict including killings, torture, sexual violence, abductions, forced recruitment, coerced child labour, forced disappearance, and arbitrary detention. Civilians without national identification, specifically men and boys, suspected of association with non-state armed groups are frequently detained. Women and children are increasingly used as person-borne improvised explosive devices (PBIEDs) with over 130 children (mainly girls) reported to have been used in north-east Nigeria in 2017 with many more used in the far north of Cameroon. Education has been deliberately attacked by Boko Haram, with girls' education targeted in particular; 983 schools have closed across the region due to insecurity. Schools have been burnt, bombed and used for military purposes and teachers forced to flee. The health infrastructure has been strongly affected. Families are unable to cover their basic needs due to displacement or lack of economic infrastructure; as a result, malnutrition is high and causing irrevocable harm to children in particular. The crisis remains acute and ever evolving with conflict-affected areas in varying stages of development.

In one of the poorest regions of the world, the root causes of the crisis run deep and range from environmental degradation, including the shrinking of Lake Chad as a major source of water and livelihoods, political instability, growing conflicts over water and land, to rapid population growth. **Comprehensive action is needed in the short, medium, and long term to protect the people affected by this crisis and to stabilise communities' lives, livelihoods, and futures.**

Building on the Oslo Humanitarian Conference on Nigeria and the Lake Chad Region held in February 2017 (Oslo I), and the collective stabilisation efforts that have been undertaken including the first meeting of the Consultative Group on Prevention and Stabilisation in the Lake Chad Region in Berlin in September 2017, the Stabilisation Consultations that took place in Ndjamena in November 2017 and the Lake Chad Governors Conference in May 2018, the co-hosts – Germany, Nigeria, Norway and the United Nations decided to organize a second Conference on the Lake Chad Region. The conference will focus on the following thematic areas: 1) life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection, 2) crisis prevention and stabilisation, and 3) resilience and sustainable development.

Civil Society across the four countries, including community-based organisations, civil society networks, local and international NGOs continue to work together to elevate the Lake Chad Basin crisis on a regional and international level. Since the Oslo I Conference, the regional forums have collectively developed papers for a number of international events and have organized and participated in events

and lobbied key influencers. This includes, but is not limited to, having key representations and prior consultations before the Berlin, Ndjamena and the Lake Chad Governor's Conferences and various high level meetings at the NY and Geneva level. The Lake Chad Civil Society Network, an outcome of the Oslo Conference, met in Abuja in February 2018 and held an *Opening Ceremony of Capacity Building Training of the Civil Society Network of Lake Chad Basin*.

### **Civil society engagement for the High-Level Conference in Berlin**

Prior to the Berlin conference, national and international civil society has participated in consultations at country level in order to highlight operational challenges and advocacy priorities with the aim of addressing them at the conference. These consultations will result in the selection of representatives from each country to participate in the high level segment on the first day of the conference; three of them will participate as panellists to the thematic panels on humanitarian assistance, crisis prevention and stabilisation, as well as development.

Recognising the key role of civil society in ensuring that operational realities and challenges are elevated, civil society is organising the following sessions during the course of the conference:

Day 1: Before the official opening of the conference, a roundtable of the selected representatives from the four countries will be organised, where highlights, common and diverging priorities from the national consultations can be presented. This will be followed by short, "impromptu" replies from a diversity of actors, which will serve to set the scene for the conference.

Day 2: There will be a civil society segment, consisting of two separate sessions. Based on feedback from local civil society, national and international NGOs active in the region, two German NGOs (Plan International Germany and Caritas Germany, who were appointed by the co-hosts of the conference to this effect) have developed the following outline for this segment.

### **Outline of the Civil Society Segment**

The Lake Chad Basin Crisis is a multidimensional crisis. Affected populations still need immediate humanitarian assistance to survive and cope with its consequences but the crisis develops against a background of deeply entrenched problems of extreme poverty in and political and economic marginalization of the region which need to be addressed to contribute to a better future for inhabitants of the Chad Basin.

This segment will enable civil society to be vocal about their major concerns and the continuing gaps and needs across the region. Civil Society voices will open the conference on Day 1; following on from Day 1 discussions, key concerns across the spectrum of humanitarian assistance and protection, stabilisation, and development will be further highlighted and explored. The segments intend to carry discussions forward under the following overarching question:

#### ***What can be done by whom to work on the root causes and on the consequences of the crisis?***

To answer this question and be able to come to concrete action points, we intend to structure both segments along four key questions:

- What are good practices and future potential from civil society actors?
- Where do civil society actors need support to fulfil our role?
- Which responsibilities lie with national and local governments, the international community, and the UN system and what do these stakeholders have to do to fulfil their obligations?
- How can decision-making be moved closer to the affected people?

**DAY 1: 8:30-9:45: Key messages from Civil Society consultations***Facilitation: Manisha Thomas*

<b>min</b>	<b>What?</b>	
5 min	Welcome remarks	Representative of German Government
30 min	Interactive interview of Civil Society Representatives	Civil Society Representatives will present outcomes from the national consultations: key concerns and recommendations, including common points and country-specific issues, focusing on the three overarching themes of the three high-level panels to follow.
20-25 min	Replies to civil society comments from various stakeholders	Representatives from UN Agencies, governments, as well as academia, will give short, impromptu replies to comment from their respective perspective.
15-20 min	Plenary discussion and wrap-up	

**DAY 2: Civil Society Segment**

Each session will commence with a moderated, interactive panel discussions with a mixture of key civil society representatives and high level representation from the UN, local and national governments and researchers. Key field perspectives and challenges will be provided with evidence-based information and analysis informing key recommendations. The panel will be followed by plenary discussions with interventions from the floor. Recommendations from the national consultations and previous events focusing on the Lake Chad Basin will be used to focus and stimulate the debate.

The segment is intended to be action-orientated and will focus on key recommendations and ways forward under the four guiding questions; *the focus of this session will also be determined considering the feedback from civil society stakeholders in the region and potentially day 1 of the conference.* Various stakeholders at national and international level, including UN actors and donors will be targeted. The outcome of this segment will contribute to the drafting - following the conference - of a concrete **Plan of Action for Civil Society Actors** to be followed up at country level and across the region. This will ensure continuation of accountability to the commitments and results from the conference.

---

**Tue. 4 Sept., 8:30 - 9:30 AM, Session 1 of the Civil Society segment: Addressing needs from a humanitarian and development perspective**

*Facilitation: Manisha Thomas*

<b>min</b>	<b>What?</b>	
5 min	Welcome and introduction	
30 min	Panel Discussion	<p>The humanitarian dimension and the development &amp; resilience dimensions will be discussed in the first part. It will take the form of a moderated panel discussion. Based on input from civil society actors and INGOs in the run-up to the conference, these are some of the issues that may arise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of civilians, including most vulnerable groups</li> <li>• Humanitarian access</li> <li>• Safe, voluntary, and dignified return</li> <li>• Effective humanitarian coordination and information management at all levels, including, and with a focus on, local actors</li> <li>• Increase State presence and provision of basic services, including especially health services, agriculture/livelihood opportunities, WASH etc. and a particular focus on quality education</li> <li>• Building resilience at individual, community, and government levels</li> </ul> <p><i>Panellists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Edward Kallon, RC/HC Nigeria</i></li> <li>• <i>Liz Ahua, Regional Refugee Coordinator for the Nigeria/Lake Chad Basin crisis, UNHCR</i></li> <li>• <i>Hauwa Bah Abubakar, Yobe CSO Network</i></li> <li>• <i>Hussaini Abdu, INGO Representative Nigeria, Country Director Plan International Nigeria</i></li> <li>• <i>Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, Expert/Academic (IRD/CEPED/ Prio)</i></li> <li>• <i>Representative of riparian country or donor country (still TBC)</i></li> </ul>
20 min	Plenary discussion	The focus will be on developing clear recommendations on the way forward for national and international civil society, UN and other international organisations, host governments and the international community.
5 min	Closing and linking to session 2	

**Tue. 4 Sept., 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM, Session 2 of the Civil Society Segment: People-centred stabilisation for the LCB Region and a way forward for the Lake Chad Basin**

*Facilitation: Manisha Thomas*

min	What?	
35 min	Panel Discussion	<p>A multidimensional crisis like the Chad Basin crisis needs a multidimensional approach to stabilisation, which includes social cohesion, civil conflict transformation, and addressing conflicts over livelihoods and resources. It will take the form of a moderated panel discussion. Based on input from civil society actors and INGOs in the run-up to the conference, these are some of the issues that may arise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with communities and traditional/local leadership on social cohesion, including interreligious dialogue</li> <li>• Supporting DDR in terms of retraining, economic opportunities and social reintegration</li> <li>• Access to land for displaced and returnees, including legal provisions for land use</li> <li>• Addressing the vulnerabilities of youth, incl. access to social and economic development</li> <li>• Strengthening of protection and GBV counselling</li> <li>• Reintegration of former combatants</li> <li>• An all-inclusive peace-building framework, placing civil society in the centre, including through institutionalized participation in the consultative group and other institutional innovations, including at national level</li> </ul> <p><i>Panellists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Bintou Djibo, RC/HC Niger</i></li> <li>• <i>Marthe Wandou, ALDEPA</i></li> <li>• <i>Father John Bakeni, Caritas Nigeria/Maiduguri</i></li> <li>• <i>Pierre Valiquette, Care International</i></li> <li>• <i>Father Atta Barkindo, Kukah Center</i></li> <li>• <i>Rüdiger König, Head of DG Stabilization, German Foreign Ministry</i></li> </ul>
35 min	Plenary discussion	The focus will be on developing clear recommendations on the way forward for national and international civil society, UN and other international organisations, host governments and the international community.
15 min	Synthesis of results	Main highlights and recommendations from the two conference days so far will be highlighted.
5 min	Closing and next steps	

**Outcomes/follow up**

- Clear messages on key concerns for the region
- Recommendations for multiple stakeholders
- Civil society Plan of Action, including accountability of participating stakeholders regarding their commitments and vis-à-vis the affected populations