



# High-Level Conference on the Lake Chad Region

Federal Foreign Office, Berlin - Germany, 3 - 4 September 2018

#LakeChadBerlin

## Conference Concept Note

### **Background**

Poverty, climate change and violent conflict have impacted lives and livelihoods in the Lake Chad Basin region, negatively impacting millions of people, especially women and children. The intensity and expansion of non-state armed groups' activities since 2009 has led to massive internal and cross-border displacement, destruction of livelihoods, properties, social ties and social fabric, human rights abuses, as well as disruption of government institutions and apparatus, including in the health and education sectors.

Violent conflicts continue to fuel large-scale human suffering in north-east Nigeria and parts of Niger, Chad and Cameroon located in the Lake Chad region. In 2018, more than ten million people need life-saving assistance and protection. Some 2.4 million people are displaced, including 1.7 million internally displaced in north-east Nigeria alone and more than 215,000 Nigerian refugees have fled to Niger, Cameroon and Chad. The combined 2018 humanitarian requirements for the region affected by the crisis total US\$ 1.56 billion, including US\$ 157 million for the Regional Refugee Response Plan. The needs for early recovery and medium- to long-term development assistance also remain substantial.

Following the Oslo Humanitarian Conference on Nigeria and the Lake Chad Region held in February 2017, at which US\$672 million in financial support was pledged for 2017 and beyond, the humanitarian response in the Lake Chad region was scaled up significantly: more than six million people were reached with assistance in 2017, and in north-east Nigeria a famine was averted. At the same time, regional cooperation to address factors driving the crisis was strengthened, including and particularly through the Consultative Group on Prevention and Stabilization in the Lake Chad Region, which grew out of the Oslo Conference and provides a strategic platform for discussion on crisis prevention and stabilization<sup>1</sup> in the region. In parallel, important initiatives have been undertaken by the respective governments, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the African Union and other actors to scale up development-oriented actions by integrating more risk-tolerance, flexibility and innovation in program design.

Following the first meeting of the Consultative Group in Berlin in September 2017, sub-national actors from the region met in the framework of the "Lake Chad Governors' Forum" in Maiduguri in May 2018 in order to foster regional cross-border cooperation among decision-makers. The instigated political process is aimed at contributing to the ongoing efforts of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the African Union to develop a full-fledged stabilization strategy for the region.

Strengthening collective efforts among the wide range of actors addressing the complex crisis in the Lake Chad region is a key priority: Humanitarian assistance has saved lives and prevented millions of people from slipping below emergency thresholds, and must be sustained. In order to resolve ongoing conflicts and build peace, political solutions to the crisis need to be found across borders.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of the conference, stabilization is understood as shaping political processes in order to contain violence. Stabilization initiatives seek to enable first steps towards reconciliation between parties to the conflict and to establish social and political consensus as a foundation for legitimate political structures and long-term development.

In parallel, more longer-term development investments are needed to re-establish civilian government presence and services, build resilience<sup>2</sup> and address the underlying vulnerabilities and conflict drivers.

Building on the achievements, partnerships, and commitments from the Oslo Conference and its follow-up processes and consultations, the co-hosts – Germany, Nigeria, Norway, and the United Nations – have decided to organize a second Conference on the Lake Chad region. In addition to humanitarian action, this Conference will aim to promote resilience as well as crisis prevention and stabilization initiatives through cross-border cooperation and sustainable development efforts to meet the longer-term needs of those affected by the crisis.

### **Objectives**

- Reinforce a collective, multi-faceted approach to addressing the crisis and its root causes;
- Support the leadership of the affected governments and strengthen their partnerships with regional and international partners;
- Mobilize international resources to address the immediate and longer-term needs of those affected by the crisis, particularly the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups;
- Galvanize support for principled humanitarian assistance, unimpeded and unfettered humanitarian access to those affected by the crisis, and strengthened protection of civilians;
- Address the mid-term and longer-term needs of those affected by the crisis through resilience-building, crisis prevention and stabilization and sustainable development.

Gender will be a cross-cutting theme in all sessions. The thematic sessions will consider how to address the needs of women and men, girls and boys respectively. Special attention will be given to protection of civilians, protection against sexual and gender-based violence, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, child protection and the leadership role of women and youth in promoting solutions to the crisis.

### **Program**

The Conference is a two-day event. Ministers from the affected countries as well as Governors of the Lake Chad region are invited alongside donors, key United Nations organizations, International and Regional Organizations, International Financial Institutions and civil society.

The Conference addresses the following thematic areas: (i) life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection; (ii) crisis prevention and stabilization; and (iii) building resilience for sustainable development. It focuses on how the international community, regional partners and affected governments can best work together to address the crisis and aim to facilitate new financial resources.

The program allows prominent roles for the affected countries as well as for co-hosts, including opening and closing sessions. In the high-level segment, participants will be invited to make statements of political and financial support (maximum two minutes each).

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<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of the conference, resilience is understood as a transformative process of strengthening the capacity of men, women, boys and girls, communities, institutions and countries to anticipate, prevent, recover from and transform in the aftermath of shocks, stresses and change.