



# High-Level Conference on the Lake Chad Region

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

#LakeChadBerlin

## OUTCOME STATEMENT BY THE CO-HOSTS

*Germany, Nigeria, Norway and the United Nations hosted the High-Level Conference on the Lake Chad Region which brought together 27 nations, 24 regional and international organizations and representatives of national and international civil society. We convened to recommit to work together to address the humanitarian needs and build the resilience of the over 17 million people still affected by the regional crisis and to identify ways of strengthening the collective response. The conference noted the progress made since the Oslo Humanitarian Conference on scaling up humanitarian assistance, crisis prevention and stabilization, and development cooperation. In total, announcements of financial support, including multi-year, surpassed US\$ 2.17 billion in grants in addition to US\$ 467 million in concessional loans.*

The conference was a success – stakeholders working on humanitarian assistance, crisis prevention and stabilization, and development came together to identify shared challenges and opportunities. The conference highlighted the added value of bringing together a range of stakeholders and taking a multi-dimensional approach to the crisis. Discussions throughout the two days underlined the regional dimension of the crisis that transcends national borders. The participation of all affected countries, particularly by the governors and civil society representatives, was key to ground the discussions in the reality of the everyday experience of people affected by the crisis. In this regard, the conference underscored the importance of a people-centered approach, building on the capacities of individuals and communities, in shaping responses across all pillars.

Conference participants agreed that addressing the challenges in the Lake Chad region in a sustainable way requires a coherent and multi-year approach. The three high-level panel discussions recognized that actors in the humanitarian, stabilization and crisis prevention, and sustainable development spheres have distinct but complementary roles to play to address needs, strengthen the resilience of affected populations and countries, and work towards the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution on the situation in the Lake Chad region 2349 (2017) based on their respective mandates.

- Principled humanitarian action is necessary to respond to urgent needs with life-saving assistance and will continue to be required in the short- and medium-term despite improvements. We emphasized that it is the responsibility of all parties to the armed conflict to protect civilians and ensure safe, timely and unhindered humanitarian access to people in need in accordance with international humanitarian law.
- Actors in the region have already started a process of cross-border cooperation to help resolve conflict, nurture reconciliation and address root causes of the conflict. We expressed strong support for these efforts and also noted the important contributions that can be made by regional organizations in working towards the stabilization of the region.
- Strengthening resilience for sustainable development is essential for reducing vulnerabilities in the long term and efforts are already under way. We highlighted the leadership of governments in the region and the centrality of resilience-building measures at all levels.
- The conference stressed that the crisis disproportionately affects women and girls and underlined the importance of strengthening protection in interventions, in particular the need for enhanced protection against gender-based violence and welcomed the north-east Nigeria Call to Action road map.



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## **Key messages from the thematic sessions**

### ***On humanitarian assistance and the protection of civilians:***

- We acknowledged the impressive scale-up of humanitarian assistance since the Oslo Humanitarian Conference in 2017. Thanks to the generous donor contributions and the efforts of governments and humanitarian partners, famine was averted. However, current humanitarian appeals for the region are underfunded which impedes the ability to meet the needs of millions of people. Therefore, humanitarian funding needs to be sustained in the short and medium-term.
- The conference recognized that despite improvements, large-scale and urgent humanitarian and protection needs in the Lake Chad region persist including those driven by continued displacement.
- We stressed the importance of strengthening the protection of civilians, especially for women and girls, and working proactively to prevent sexual and gender-based violence, and enhance efforts to support survivors.
- We called upon all states to uphold their international human rights obligations, and all parties to the conflict to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law, including by taking constant care in their military operations to spare the civilian population and objects.
- We recognized that refugees are subject to international protection principles and obligations and that the protection of internally displaced people remains a central pillar in the humanitarian response. We noted that return should only occur once the conditions allow, on a voluntary, dignified and safe basis, in accordance with applicable norms of international law and in particular the principle of non-refoulement for refugees.
- The conference called upon all parties to uphold their obligation to allow and facilitate timely and unhindered passage of impartial humanitarian relief for civilians in need. We expressed concern about the dangers faced by aid workers and reminded all parties that humanitarian personnel and assets must be respected and protected.
- We acknowledged the affected governments' efforts to respond to the crisis and their primary responsibility to protect and meet the needs of affected people and to facilitate the humanitarian response. We called for concerted efforts to strengthen the role of national and local actors in the provision of humanitarian assistance, with international actors complementing national and local efforts and capacities.

### ***On crisis prevention and stabilization:***

- The conference highlighted that stabilization in the Lake Chad region is understood as supporting political processes on the ground and supporting security efforts in order to reduce violence. Stabilization seeks 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. The conference underlined the importance of joint efforts to prevent further outbreaks of violent conflict and an escalation of conflicts into crises.
- The conference further underscored that supporting political processes to develop a common regional approach on stabilization is pivotal. The conference welcomed the establishment of the Governors' Forum in Maiduguri in May 2018 as an important tool for cross-border cooperation. In this regard, we welcomed enhanced cooperation by the Governors of the riparian provinces and states and the consultation processes which increased civil society participation at the local level, especially of traditional and religious leaders, youth and women movements, and community health workers.
- The conference further welcomed the success of the collaborative efforts of countries in the region, the African Union and the Lake Chad Basin Commission for having adopted a full-fledged stabilization

strategy and encouraged that these efforts be implemented and supported. It was particularly underlined that ownership of these actors is crucial for a successful implementation of common strategies.

- The conference highlighted the importance of stabilization efforts to support local governance as well as reconciliation and mediation, ensuring rule of law to achieve reliable, effective and accountable institutions.
- The conference emphasized the importance of supporting security sector reform (SSR). This includes all levels of the security sector, from community to regional level.
- The conference underlined the importance of building legal foundations for a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process, and supporting reintegration of former fighters, Civilian Joint Task Force members and vigilantes with reconciliation efforts, education and job perspectives. Furthermore, we stressed the need to strengthen prevention of violent extremism.

***On building resilience for sustainable development:***

- We acknowledged the recent efforts by Governments and development partners to increase development investments in the region, including through regional approaches. They are demonstrating that implementing development-oriented action in the region is possible, despite high risks inherent to the crisis.
- The conference highlighted that coordination between all actors is essential to strengthen resilience of individuals, communities and institutions and put the region on the path of sustainable development. It was emphasized that this is critical to addressing the underlying causes of the crisis, reducing inequality, improving social services, such as health and education, and natural resource management, laying the foundations for inclusive economic growth. We recognized efforts by countries of the region under the leadership of Nigeria to strengthen partnership between humanitarian and development actors, such as the high-level event at the UN in June 2018 at the margins of the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment.
- We recognized that developing strategies to address the risks and vulnerabilities and offer durable solutions to those most affected by the crisis, especially internally displaced people and refugees, including through development investments supporting efforts by governments, is essential to reduce humanitarian needs. This requires enhanced coherence and complementarity between humanitarian, stabilization, crisis prevention and development partners, in respect of their respective mandates.
- The conference highlighted that in addition to scaling up investment, we need a better coordinated approach complementary to reforms pursued by governments. We agreed that a military approach will not be enough to create sustainable peace and stability. Resilience means going beyond simply restoring the *status quo ante*, which contributed to giving rise to the crisis: it means building a better standard of living than before. There is an urgent need for governments and partners to continue to scale up efforts for transformational change.
- We emphasized that scaling up development-oriented action can be more effective by involving communities, integrating risk-tolerance, flexibility and adaptability in program design as well as investing in change agents such as women and youth. It also requires a strong involvement by the private sector. Tapping into the region's potential of youth and empowering communities to shape their own future is key for long-term development.
- The conference stressed that reforms are needed to pursue more effective decentralization, and reach greater geographical equity in the allocation of public resources based on national realities. This would help building the capacity of public institutions to deliver key public services and serve their citizens to build resilience.

