



REPORT OF THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE LAKE CHAD BASIN GOVERNORS' FORUM

**FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION ON STABILIZATION, PEACEBUILDING AND
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION AFFECTED BY BOKO HARAM**

**State Conference Hall, Maiduguri, Borno State,
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**Organized jointly
by**

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Foreword

The Boko Haram insurgency, now in its 10th year, has caused unspeakable devastation to people around Lake Chad. Men, women and children have suffered tremendously as a result of the violence, instability and humanitarian crisis that has ensued. Given the peculiar contexts in communities across the Lake Chad region, these challenges have had increasing regional implications. This dynamic requires a collective and holistic approach to stabilization and peacebuilding processes that both address regional dimensions as well as enable affected communities to meaningfully contribute towards peace and development.

The establishment of the Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum for regional cooperation on stabilization, peacebuilding and sustainable development in the regions affected by Boko Haram is to contribute to a coordinated regional approach with the aim to overcome the existing challenges. Furthermore, the Forum fosters regional coherence and coordination of efforts to address this crisis, whilst at the same time ensuring that affected populations are engaged in consultations to contribute to shaping the future of the Lake Chad Basin. This mechanism is an important step in developing a coherent and shared vision for peace and development for the region.

As host of the inaugural meeting of the Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum, I wish to take the opportunity to appreciate all our partners that have joined in to support in the fight against violence, insecurity and poverty and have helped pave the way for a more peaceful future in the Lake Chad Basin region. The tireless support of multilateral, continental and regional institutions, such as the United Nations, African Union, European Union, the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS), Economic Community of Central Africa States (ECCAS), the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the World Bank, and of bilateral partners such as Germany, Sweden, Norway, and many more, ensure that we can walk this path together for an increased impact for the entire region. The regional challenges that we face must be managed jointly, in partnership, with a shared vision for a better future as our guiding light.

It is my hope that with these efforts and partnerships, the page can be turned for the Lake Chad Basin, to leave a violent chapter in our history behind us for a more prosperous future for all.

H.E. Kashim Shettima
Executive Governor, Borno State
Federal Republic of Nigeria

Acknowledgments

The holding of the inaugural meeting of the Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum for regional cooperation on stabilization, peacebuilding and sustainable development would not have been possible without the generous efforts and contributions of a myriad of partners.

First and foremost, the Forum appreciates the commitment of H.E. Kashim Shettima to drive this initiative, lending political, financial and technical support to ensure that the inaugural Forum meeting would be a success. The Forum also wishes to extend its gratitude to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the broader United Nations System for its support to the process, as well as the key partners Germany, Sweden, Norway and the European Union. The assistance and support provided by these partners enabled a successful inaugural meeting and has helped pave the way for a more inclusive approach to addressing the Boko Haram crisis.

The Forum also wishes to extend its sincere appreciation to all those who attended this inaugural meeting. Many participants had to travel far, but their valuable presence in the Forum was key to its overall success. The Forum especially appreciates the actively engaged participants who put forward their experiences, lessons learned and innovative ideas for addressing the challenges faced by the region.

On a final note, the Forum sincerely appreciates all the stakeholders who were engaged as part of the consultative process leading up to the Forum meeting. It is recognized that over 1,100 people gave their opinions, thoughts and ideas on how to move past the seemingly insurmountable challenges in the region. Their contributions are essential for ensuring that the Forum remains relevant, credible and responsive to the needs of communities and affected populations, ensuring its relevance and credibility as it aims to contribute to stabilizing and building peace across the Lake Chad sub-region.

Executive Summary

This report compiles the deliberations of the inaugural meeting of the Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum ('the Forum') for regional cooperation on stabilization, peacebuilding and sustainable development in the region affected by Boko Haram. The Forum was formally launched on 8–9 May 2018 in Maiduguri, Borno State, Federal Republic of Nigeria and comprises the governors of the regions in Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria most affected by the violence caused by Boko Haram and related challenges. The objective of the Forum is to promote continuous dialogue and the sharing of information, best practices and lessons learned, and to strengthen coordination and collaboration on cross-border initiatives at the subnational level around the Lake Chad Basin. The Forum emerged from the recommendations of the Senior Officials' Meeting of the Oslo Consultative Group on Prevention and Stabilization in the Lake Chad Region, held in Berlin in September 2017. It aims to support the political process to stabilize the region, prevent further crises in the region, and makes a significant contribution to the regional response to the challenges, as called for in the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2349 (2017).

At the inaugural meeting in Maiduguri on 8-9 May 2018, nine governors from Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria convened with over 150 stakeholders representing national institutions, multilateral and bilateral partners, as well as civil society from the region. The two-day event included thematic sessions on regional stabilization, reintegration and reconciliation and transitional justice, as well as broader discussions with partners of the region and governors' perspectives on stabilization, peacebuilding and sustainable development. A formal declaration of the establishment of the Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum was delivered on behalf of the governors, and the event concluded with a communiqué outlining their commitments.

The structure and content of the inaugural Forum meeting was informed by extensive regional consultations, undertaken by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which included focus group discussions across the four countries with over 1,100 individuals. The purpose of these consultations was to ensure that community input was brought into the Forum discussions, and that these address the needs and priorities of the affected populations. Findings from the community consultations were compiled into a Discussion Paper (Annex V), and also informed the content of the Forum meeting.

Governors at the inaugural Forum meeting agreed they would use the Forum as a mechanism to advance the stabilization, peace and sustainable development agenda in the Lake Chad Basin, including as it relates to the development and implementation of the regional stabilization strategy being developed by the African Union and Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC). They took note of the extensive efforts towards stabilizing the Lake Chad Basin, and appreciated the regional consultations with communities undertaken by UNDP. They stressed the importance of a community-based approach to ensuring sustainable solutions to the Boko Haram crisis, and highlighted the particularly important roles that traditional rulers, religious leaders, women and youth can and must play in the stabilization process. In so doing, the Forum resolved to regularly consult and include these groups in their consultations and meetings as part of a broader effort of ensuring a bottom-up approach to stabilization and peacebuilding of the Lake Chad Basin.

In building off the momentum generated by the inaugural meeting the Forum recognized the importance of continuing the process through the following key steps:

1. The need to continue regularly convening the Forum, with the next meeting holding in Niger by the end of the first quarter of 2019.
2. That the governors would continue to use the Forum as a platform to foster regional cooperation on stabilization, peacebuilding and sustainable development for the region.
3. That a dedicated team, led by UNDP, would be set up to support the Forum. The first task of this team would be to support the planning and preparations for the next Forum meeting in Niger.
4. That the work of the Forum feeds into and supports the regional stabilization strategy being developed by the African Union and the LCBC.

The governors agreed that the next meeting of the Forum would be held in Niger by the end of the first quarter of 2019.

1. Introduction

On 8–9 May 2018, the inaugural meeting of the Lake Chad Basin Governors’ Forum (“the Forum”) for regional cooperation on stabilization, peacebuilding, and sustainable development interventions in the region affected by Boko Haram was held in Maiduguri, Borno State, Federal Republic of Nigeria. This first meeting of the Forum was jointly organized by the State Government of Borno and the United Nations through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with support from the Governments of Germany, Sweden and Norway, as well as the European Union. It is envisaged that the Forum would become a long-term mechanism and increase national, regional and international support for recovery, rehabilitation, re-integration and reconstruction processes as well as for community-based strategies for peacebuilding in the Lake Chad Basin. In this regard, it was agreed that UNDP would continue to support the meetings of the governors who comprise the Forum in close collaboration with the Lake Chad Basin Commission and other key partners.

This report is structured as follows: a background section situates the establishment of the Lake Chad Basin Governors’ Forum in the broader stabilization and peacebuilding processes in the sub-region. This is followed by a section outlining the main purpose, rationale and specific objectives of the Forum. Section 4 discusses the participants and key stakeholders present at the inaugural meeting of the Forum. In Section 5, a summary of the main deliberations and central messages are provided, as well as recommendations from each thematic session. This is followed by a section outlining next steps for the Forum, as well as a conclusion outlining the main takeaways from the two-day Forum event. Five annexes provide additional information as reference documents: (i) the Statement of Declaration; (ii) the Joint Communiqué; (iii) the Conference Programme; (iv) the List of Participants; and (v) the Discussion Paper.

2. Background

For decades the Lake Chad Basin has been marked by growing fragility, resource scarcity, environmental degradation, weak governance and low investments in human development. In 2009, these underlying causes enabled a resurgence of conflict, violence and instability, underpinned by the Boko Haram insurgency. It is evident that the crisis continues to exact a tremendous toll on the people of the Lake Chad Basin. At its peak, the violence displaced some 2.7 million people across the region.¹ The conflict further precipitated a devastating humanitarian crisis, ranked as one of the four worst humanitarian crises globally in 2017. As of today, 2.3 million people remain displaced, with an estimated 10.7 million people in need across the affected areas of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, and 5.8 million food-insecure people classified as being at crisis and emergency levels. Violent incidents causing casualties among civilians, humanitarian workers and State armed forces are also recurring, to date mostly concentrated in Nigeria’s Borno State and Cameroon’s Far North region.²

The complexity of the crisis as well as the severe humanitarian impact have led to broad efforts to mobilize support and seek solutions to the challenges. National governments, together with state and regional authorities, have

¹ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2016). Lake Chad Basin, Crisis Overview as of 3 June 2016.

² UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2018). Lake Chad Basin, Crisis Overview as of 16 March 2018.

made significant efforts to respond to the needs of the affected people. These efforts have also brought international support – financial, technical, and political. At the continental level, the African Union Peace and Security Council, at its 489th meeting, held on 3 March 2015, issued a communiqué in support of efforts of Member States of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and the Republic of Benin, through the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), “for their continued commitment and sustained efforts towards a coordinated and effective regional response to the threat posed by the Boko Haram terrorist group.”³ The meeting of the Council of Ministers of Member States of the LCBC and Benin, held on 24 February 2017, noted the progress made by the MNJTF as well as the need to develop strategies for handling the post-operation era. At a joint workshop organized in Abuja, Nigeria from 11 to 13 September 2017, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and the Secretariat of the Economic Community of the Central Africa States (ECCAS), in close consultation and collaboration with the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS), agreed to expedite action to hold the Joint Summit on Boko Haram, Terrorism and Violent Extremism. They noted that such an event would enhance interregional cooperation for peace and security in the sub-region.

However, despite this progress, the African Union Peace and Security Council noted that a number of borderlands remain fragile, experiencing continued violence, insecurity and instability. The humanitarian situation remains severe. Food security is seriously deteriorating in the affected areas, and civilians, particularly vulnerable groups such as women, youth and children, continue to face massive human rights abuses, including sexual and gender-based violence and wide-ranging protection risks. There is therefore an urgent need to move beyond military stability operations and shorter-term humanitarian assistance, and implement a more systematic, coordinated and integrated response aiming for the recovery and peacebuilding in the affected areas in the Lake Chad Basin. The underlying economic, social, political and security stresses that fuel the conflict need to be addressed holistically.

To complement these continental and regional efforts, in March 2017, the United Nations Security Council visited the Lake Chad Basin countries in order to have first-hand understanding of the challenges on the ground. The visit resulted in the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2349 (2017), which provided an international framework for addressing the crisis and building sustainable peace and fostering development for the region. This United Nations Security Council Resolution on Boko Haram and Lake Chad provided a much-needed focus on the challenges in the sub-region. This engendered a political push towards leveraging the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and addressing the crisis through regional cooperation. The Resolution also highlighted the key role of Lake Chad Basin Commission, ECOWAS, ECCAS and the African Union in addressing the regional crisis.

Against this background, high-level conferences have taken place to build political support for solutions to the Lake Chad crisis and help chart a way forward. The Oslo Humanitarian Conference on Nigeria and the Lake Chad Region was held in February 2017 to mobilize support for lifesaving assistance to address the urgent humanitarian needs of the region. In September 2017, the first Senior Officials’ Meeting of the Oslo Consultative Group for Prevention and Stabilization in the Lake Chad Region was convened in Berlin, Germany, and called for an increased regional collaboration, emphasizing the importance of cross-border exchanges and dialogue to find a lasting solution to the crisis. This was followed by the Conference on the Development of a Framework for a Regional Stabilization Strategy for areas in the Lake Chad Basin region affected by Boko Haram, held on 2–4 November 2017, jointly facilitated by the African Union and the LCBC. The outcome of the conference identified key themes

³ African Union Commission (2015). Communiqué of the 489th Peace and Security Council meeting on Boko Haram terrorist group: <http://www.peaceau.org/en/article/communique-of-the-489th-psc-meeting-on-boko-haram>.

for regional stabilization including, among others: strategic political cooperation; enhancement of local capacities and consolidation of resilience; restoration of livelihoods and socio-economic revitalization; education, information and communication strategy; and building of partnerships. Since then, efforts have continued towards developing a coordinated and holistic approach to the stabilization of the region, and in particular, a comprehensive and sustainable reintegration strategy to lay the foundation for a lasting peace. These efforts have also been situated within the longer-term prospects of recharging the Lake Chad water levels, as was agreed at the International Conference on Lake Chad in Abuja in February 2018, where Heads of State from around the Lake Chad region convened and endorsed plans for an inter-basin water transfer from the Congo Basin. Taken together, these high-level conferences demonstrate a strong national, regional and international commitment to finding lasting solutions to the crisis in the Lake Chad Basin.

Notwithstanding the essential roles that national governments continue to play, the conclusion is that as a regional crisis, the Lake Chad Basin crisis demands a holistic and regional stabilization response that builds on input and advice from communities and affected populations. A bottom-up approach is urgently required, in recognition of the role that communities as well as traditional and religious institutions, women and young people must play in driving the agenda towards stabilization and peace in the Lake Chad Basin. Furthermore, in leveraging the unique context around Lake Chad and the strong regional and cross-border linkages, the role of governors in the region emerges as central in addressing the regional crisis. Governors in the region play key roles in driving the stabilization, peacebuilding and sustainable development agenda, and an increased exchange, dialogue and collaboration among them help build regional linkages and synergies in such processes. The Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum was established within this context and advances the regional stabilization agenda as recommended at the first Senior Officials' Meeting of the Oslo Consultative Group for Prevention and Stabilization in the Lake Chad Region. The inaugural Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum for regional cooperation on stabilization, peacebuilding and sustainable development was subsequently held in Maiduguri, Nigeria and constitutes a continuation of the stabilization agenda outlined in United Nations Security Council Resolution 2349 (2017).

3. Purpose and Objectives of the Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum

The overall goal of the Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum is to promote continuous dialogue and the sharing and exchanges of information, best practices and lessons learned, and to strengthen coordination and collaboration on cross-border initiatives at the subnational level around the Lake Chad Basin. It is envisaged that such a Forum could help leverage peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts in the Lake Chad Basin and provide a path for lasting peace and sustainable development. In addition, the Forum will ensure that its efforts are consistent, complementary and aligned with the regional stabilization strategy, specifically in support of:

- effectively and efficiently coordinating community-based stabilization initiatives, including the promotion of dialogue, community-based reintegration of former combatants, and the dignified and voluntary resettlement of displaced persons;
- enhancing synergies between peacebuilding processes, including strengthening transitional justice and supporting a community-based approach to reconciliation and healing;

- enhancing conflict prevention mechanisms through the use of effective early warning, early response structures and the expansion dialogue platforms at the grassroots level;
- promoting recovery and sustainable development initiatives, including revitalizing livelihoods, strengthening good governance, and ensuring inclusive and participatory economic growth, particularly by investing in women and youth.

Recognizing that these objectives cannot be achieved by any one stakeholder or actor, the Forum will collaborate to advance work in the above areas, leveraging on existing initiatives and building partnerships for a coordinated, coherent and holistic response to the challenges in the sub-region.

4. Forum Participants

The Forum was hosted under the political leadership of His Excellency (H.E) Kashim Shettima, Executive Governor of Borno State, and attended by over 150 stakeholders. H.E. Kashim Shettima, Governor of Borno State (Nigeria), H.E. Senator Mohammed Umar Jibrilla. Governor of Adamawa State (Nigeria), H.E. Ibrahim Gaidam, Governor of Yobe State (Nigeria),⁴ H.E. Mr. Bakabe Mahamadou, Governor of Diffa (Niger), H.E. Mr. Issa Moussa, Governor of Zinder (Niger), H.E Mr. Aboubakar Djibrile Aboubakar, Governor of Hadjer Lamis Region (Chad), H.E. Mr. Mahamat Abali Sallah, Governor of Lac Region (Chad), H.E. Mr. Bakari Midjiyawa, Governor of Far North Region (Cameroon) participated, together with representatives from the United Nations, African Union, European Union, Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS), Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), and key bilateral partners in the stabilization process, such as Germany, Sweden, Norway, among others. The Forum also included traditional rulers, religious leaders, representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society, the media and the press. A comprehensive list of participants is provided in Annex IV.

5. Summary of the Main Deliberations and Central Messages

The inaugural Forum meeting lasted two days (8–9 May 2018) and allowed participants to deliberate, exchange ideas and propose ways forward. The programme of events (see Annex III) was informed by regional community consultations undertaken in the lead-up to the event, which highlighted stabilization, reintegration and reconciliation as central themes to pave the way for peace and sustainable development in the region. Thematic sessions for the meeting therefore included these three themes with expert discussants and practitioners from the region. In addition, the meeting included presentations to update participants on the security and the humanitarian situation as well as perspectives from local communities on issues of stabilization and peacebuilding. The event also included a session for partners to the stabilization process in the region, as well as a session where the governors offered their reflections and insights on the state of affairs and how to best address the ongoing crisis. The two-day meeting concluded with a Joint Communiqué (Annex II).

⁴ The Yobe State Governor was represented at the event by Engr. Mohammad Suraj Wakili, Commissioner for Yobe State Ministry for Water Resources.

5.1. Political Commitments and Endorsements

The Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum was officially launched on 8 May 2018 by a joint Statement of Declaration from the Governors from Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. The Statement of Declaration (Annex I) was formally read by H.E Senator Mohammed Umar Jibrilla, the Governor of Adamawa State, Federal Republic of Nigeria, on behalf of the participating governors of the Lake Chad Basin region. The Statement indicates that the Forum is established as "a platform for regular consultation and coordination of efforts, with the aim of working together to bring about lasting solutions to common cross-border challenges". In addition, in the Statement of Declaration, the opportunity to establish and develop new partnerships in this regard was appreciated. H.E Kashim Shettima, Executive Governor of Borno State, Nigeria, delivered the keynote address on behalf of H.E. Muhammadu Buhari (GCFR), President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to mark the official launch of the Forum. He expressed the President's commitment to "restore the Lake Chad Basin to its former glory". In his own statement, Governor Shettima underscored the importance of the Lake Chad Basin Governor's Forum, stressing that it would help in finding a sustainable solution to the current crisis affecting the Lake Chad Basin, making lasting peace and sustainable development a reality.

Governors from the other three riparian states of Lake Chad, Cameroon, Chad and Niger reinforced these messages. H.E. Midjiyawa Bakary, Governor of Cameroon's Far North Region, H.E. Mahamat Abali Salah, Governor of Chad's Lac region, and H.E. Bakabe Mahamadou, Governor of Niger's Diffa region, also transmitted messages of endorsement, appreciation and support from presidents of each of the three riparian countries. H.E. Salah further underlined how the harmonized approach to the stabilization that the Forum envisages could help yield peace dividends for the affected populations. As priorities, he cited that the Forum would assist in creating the conditions to improved border security and management, providing jobs for youth, and establishing good relationships between the security forces and the population. Regarding the latter, H.E. Mahamadou stressed the important role that the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) had played in stabilizing the region.

Bilateral and multilateral partners echoed the above sentiments: H.E. Ambassador Georg Schmidt, Africa Director of the German Federal Foreign Office, stressed that the Governors were closest to the problems that the Lake Chad Basin faces, and thus also best placed to ensure the implementation of coordinated solutions. As pointed out by Mr. Daniel Wolvén, Director and Deputy Head of Africa Department at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, such solutions need to be based on a political process and grounded in respect for human rights. Mr. Wolvén added that the wide spectrum of root causes of the crisis affecting the Lake Chad Basin, including poverty, demographics and climate change, require a vision beyond a merely military solution. H.E. Ambassador Brigitte Markussen, Deputy Managing Director Africa, European External Action Service, reinforced this statement and stressed that given that the crisis was regional, the response also had to be regional, thus welcoming the coordinated approach the Forum was seeking to establish. Ambassador Markussen also underlined the continued importance of improving humanitarian access, accelerating development efforts, and complementing the MNJTF's approach with counter-terrorism, reconciliation and reintegration initiatives.

Ambassador Zaina Nyiramata, Special Representative of the African Union Commission (SRCC) to the Lake Chad Basin, represented at the event by Mr. Frank Dakouri, Senior Humanitarian and Liaison Officer and MNJTF Focal Point for the African Union in N'Djamena, commended President Muhammadu Buhari for his commitment to peace and security on the African continent, particularly in the fight against the Boko Haram insurgency. Pledging the commitment of the African Union to the Forum, she stressed that it was an opportunity to enhance synergy between various actors and agencies at the subnational and community levels in the region, including the private sector who play a key role in revitalization of the affected region. In a similar vein, the Executive Secretary of the Lake Chad Basin Commission, Ambassador Mamman Nuhu, emphasized that the high-level

participation and impressive number of participants at the Forum confirmed the importance and commitment of the people of the Lake Chad Basin as well as its partners to effectively address the challenges of the region.

H.E. Dr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas and H.E. François Louncény Fall, United Nations Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, and Central Africa, respectively, recalled that the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2349 requested that a regional strategy be developed to respond to the root causes of the Lake Chad Basin crisis. They hailed the inaugural Forum meeting as a landmark for the stabilization efforts in the region, and praised the governors' solidarity and determination in moving beyond a mere military solution to the crisis. H.E. Dr. Chambas also voiced support for the idea of an inter-basin transfer between the Congo Basin and the Lake Chad Basin to restore the water levels of Lake Chad, frequently cited by many as one of the crisis' root causes. H.E. Fall additionally stressed the importance of engaging the affected population for any durable solution to the crisis. Mr. Edward Kallon, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Nigeria, also underlined the need for enhanced participation by affected communities, expressing the wish that the Forum might provide such an opportunity. He concluded by pointing out the strong political symbolism of the inaugural Forum meeting being held in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria: "It shows the world that there are not only bullets flying in this part of the world, but that there is also hope."

5.2. Overview of Stabilization in the Lake Chad Basin

5.2.1. Update on the Security and Military Situation in the Lake Chad Basin

Major General Leo Irabor, Force Commander of the MNJTF, provided a brief update on the current military and security situation in the Lake Chad Basin. He indicated that the MNJTF was continuing its activities in all four sectors around the border areas near Lake Chad. He emphasized that the Force continues to follow relevant human rights protocols regarding peace and security, and to collaborate with national armed forces.

Currently, Boko Haram no longer poses a great threat to military instalments, even though the MNJTF still experiences some resistance in the lake areas and the border regions between Nigeria and the other Lake Chad Basin countries. Boko Haram's movement has been contained in the Lake areas through a sustained attack on four fronts, and the group deserted some of their locations due to military operations, and some fighters have surrendered or have been captured. Despite these advances, Boko Haram has been able to come to towns and villages to carry out suicide bomb attacks before receding back to the islands in Lake Chad. The MNJTF therefore aims to launch operations to clear these islands of insurgents.

The Force Commander expressed that the Forum could capitalize on the achievements and leverage the resources of the MNJTF and the national armed forces to advance development goals. One example is the construction of roads, which would be beneficial not only for the military, but also for humanitarian access and the revitalization of trade. Extension of the road network would also enhance policing of the region, because efforts can be more easily targeted to key areas. Policing should also be extended to the waterways of Lake Chad.

The Force Commander noted that progress could also be made by increasingly encouraging Boko Haram fighters to surrender. He stressed that once fighters surrender, and after thorough screening and vetting, they would be supported in their rehabilitation and reintegration into society and to start rebuilding their lives. He also called for support to be provided to internally displaced people (IDPs) and for those in need of humanitarian assistance in order to prevent frustration and any motivations to join armed groups. It remains critical to develop initiatives to

support the needs of people, whether former Boko Haram fighters or not, in order to ensure that the gains achieved are not lost.

Recommendations:

- Facilitate the cooperation of the police, military and civilian vigilante groups in policing and stabilizing the lake region.
- Partner with national and local security forces, and utilize military engineers in rebuilding and opening key roads to gradually and incrementally improve access around the region.
- Develop initiatives that encourage the surrender of Boko Haram fighters as well as programmes that support them, IDPs and others in vulnerable conditions to prevent frustration and the risk of recruitment into armed groups.

5.2.2. Update on the Humanitarian Situation in the Lake Chad Basin

Mr. Roel Debruyne, Protection Specialist representing the OCHA Regional Office, provided a brief update on the current humanitarian situation in the areas affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin. He informed the meeting that the Lake Chad Basin is a dynamic region but remote from major metropolitan hubs and national centres of power. Some of the structural vulnerabilities that affect the current humanitarian crisis include extreme poverty and low human development indicators in general, a weak state presence, high population growth and low literacy rates. Environmental factors, such as droughts, exacerbate these vulnerabilities and drive food insecurity and pervasive malnutrition. In 2018, of the 10.7 million people who are in need of humanitarian assistance, 7.8 million have been targeted by programmes. 5.8 million people are suffering from severe food insecurity. Nigeria is hit the worst by the humanitarian crisis, but needs for instance in Cameroon and other regions are also significant.

The level of displacement in the Lake Chad Basin has remained relatively stable for the past two years. There are 2.3 million IDPs in Nigeria, and approximately 100,000 IDPs in each of the neighbouring countries; in addition, Niger and Cameroon host around 200,000 refugees.⁵ IDPs and refugees live mostly in settlements, which exposes them to risk of epidemics, flooding and fires. The closure of schools further exposes children to forced recruitment into armed groups, violence and exploitation. At present, conditions are not conducive for returning, even though most people would like to if it were a viable option. He emphasized that the international principles for the safe return of refugees and IDPs need to be respected. Returns need to be voluntary, and principles of safety and human dignity need to be upheld.

Over 180 humanitarian agencies and NGOs have operational presence on the ground. Even though some successes have been achieved, for example, famine has been averted, there is a need to increase humanitarian access and cover the funding shortfall for 2018 in order to ensure that aid reaches those in need. Currently, one million people live in areas that are not accessible to international humanitarian agencies and they can only be assisted by local or national NGOs; extension of helicopter facilities would be a solution to this. In the long term, sustainable solutions to humanitarian needs can be achieved by linking humanitarian aid with development work and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Recommendations:

⁵ OCHA Presentation on 8 May 2018 at the Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria, Inaugural Forum Meeting.

- Cover the funding shortfall for 2018 to ensure that humanitarian operations can continue as planned and assist those most in need.
- Improve access in the short and long term, for example, by extending helicopter facilities, securing areas and rebuilding roads.
- Develop new ways of working and coordinating with humanitarian and development sectors.
- Ensure that sustainable solutions to the humanitarian needs are linked to development outcomes and the attainment of the SDGs.

5.2.3. Community Perspectives on Stabilization in the Lake Chad Basin

Mr. Samuel Bwalya, Country Director for UNDP in Nigeria, presented the results of the regional community and key stakeholder consultations, which were carried out by UNDP in March and April 2018. Consultations were held in 25 communities – five in Cameroon, six in Chad, four in Niger and ten in Nigeria – and key stakeholder discussions were also held in Diffa and Maiduguri. As a result, over 1,100 individuals were consulted as part of a process to better understand community views and perceptions of the ongoing crisis, as well as to hear their recommendations on how to tackle the challenges (see Annex V for more details).

The consultations revealed that security is still the foremost concern of the people of the Lake Chad Basin. Examples from all four countries illustrate how the Boko Haram crisis and the counter-insurgency response negatively affect livelihoods, which are mainly based on agriculture and fishing. This negative impact continues to push people to look for alternative forms of income generation, one of which is to join the insurgency. The consultations suggest that it would be essential to break this cyclical relationship if stabilization is to be sustainable.

It also emerged from the consultations that there was widespread reluctance to welcome former Boko Haram fighters back into the communities, because it was felt unfair to reward them with support and acceptance when victims of the crisis have yet to receive adequate support. Communities feel that destroyed infrastructure and livelihoods need to be restored before considering processes of reintegration, since former fighters would, in the current context, constitute an additional burden in an already difficult situation. The consultations underlined that stabilization cannot occur if there is no progress on security, of which improving trust between security forces and civilians is a key part. The importance of vigilante groups in providing security was also emphasized, alongside open questions about what would become of them in the future. In terms of reintegration, the governments should take the lead, but communities need to be fully involved in reintegration discussions and planning. If reintegration is to be successful, it will need to be community-based and inclusive, supporting a broad segment of the population that require reintegration support (e.g. those associated with Boko Haram, vigilante groups etc.). This support would especially have to take into account the particular needs of women and children previously associated with these groups.

Finally, the consultations revealed opportunities for working towards community-driven processes of reconciliation and healing. In this regard, communities identified traditional rulers and religious leaders as central actors with important roles in any reconciliation efforts. Communities also strongly emphasized that while women are often excluded from such traditional structures, they have an integral role to play in any successful reconciliation process and long-term healing. Additionally, it was highlighted that there is a need for the inclusion and participation of youth and the creation of new values that must be reconciled and coexist with the stewardship of traditional and religious leaders. The crisis has also precipitated a rupture of social ties more

generally, resulting in an increase in crime and intra-family violence. These wider changes underscore the importance of reconciliation that involves society in an inclusive manner.

Despite the numerous challenges, it is also important to point out that engagement with communities revealed clear, community-based solutions and approaches that leverage existing capacities and opportunities at the grassroots level. This further highlights the need for highly localized and contextualized approaches with strong community involvement throughout the stabilization process.

Recommendations:

- Design a coherent reintegration process where the governments take the lead but closely involve communities in defining its details and sequencing.
- Proactively address the future of vigilante groups and provide for adequate training and integration.
- Support and strengthen the role of women and youth in reconciliation and other peacebuilding measures.
- Advocate for smart security solutions to ensure that counter-insurgency operations and measures to promote security do not hamper early recovery and economic revitalization.

5.3. Regional Stabilization of the Lake Chad Basin

The thematic discussion on regional stabilization highlighted efforts being pursued on several levels, from regional to local. It was agreed that for stabilization to be successful, both top-down and bottom-up approaches need to be undertaken and coordinated simultaneously. Echoing the sentiments of the United Nations Security Council resolution 2349, in encouraging closer regional coherence and cooperation in the stabilization of the Lake Chad Basin, many interventions emphasized the centrality of the regional organizations and governments in these efforts. The audience was reminded that the Heads of States at the 52nd Ordinary Session of Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, held in Abuja in December 2017, were determined to launch and support the stabilization process in the region. At this summit, the Heads of States had also recognized the negative impact of Boko Haram on the region and welcomed increased efforts to counter it.

Regional engagement, facilitated by cross-border collaboration and communication, was emphasized by several discussants as a key element of successful stabilization. Some concrete tools and channels for stabilization that can be provided by regional economic communities include early warning systems, information exchanges on transnational criminality and money laundering, and support of decentralized cooperation across borders. Resources such as the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework can guide the development of a roadmap for regional stabilization in the region.

The importance of support to local, cross-border stabilization efforts was underlined by several discussants particularly given the transnational, cross-border nature of the conflict and its many contributing factors, such as the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and the increasing prevalence of communal conflicts over shared resources. Importantly, the capacity of local actors to respond to the crisis and contribute to stabilization efforts should be strengthened. It is essential to develop an understanding of the best practices on how to respond most effectively. Once areas under Boko Haram control have been recaptured and stabilized by the military, the capacities of local communities to instill peace and prevent relapse into conflict will be paramount in the transition from stability to longer peacebuilding prospects. Some existing initiatives to this end include local peace and

security committees in Niger, and the use of emergency funds and seed grants to create jobs and economic opportunities, particularly for young people.

The Borno Women Development Initiative outlined ways to engage young people in regional stabilization efforts, for example, through national and regional networks, and the development of joint peacebuilding action plans. Boko Haram has been able to exploit young people due to idleness, a lack of economic opportunities, in some cases attractive ideological arguments, and the promise of increased status and positions of leadership. It was noted by the discussants that young people have no potential for advancement in government and society at large, which may create frustration, restlessness and a sense of marginalization. It is important to see youth as part of the solution: given the right tools, they can be designers, innovators and builders of peace. The Lake Chad Basin Commission focused on the integral role that women play in the stabilization process and outlined some of the investments the Commission has made to include women in its efforts. H.E. Ambassador Mamman Nuhu, Executive Secretary of the Commission, concluded the session on regional stabilization by stating that, to date, each country had tried to work independently. However, he stressed the importance of collaborating and being open to learning from one another in the process.

Recommendations:

- Utilize and involve the tools, expertise and resources of regional organizations to support cross-border collaboration, communication and coordination of stabilization efforts.
- Increase the capacity of local communities to participate in stabilization in the long term.
- Harness the full potential of young people to build peace and create opportunities for their economic and social advancement to prevent recruitment into armed groups.
- Leverage the unique capacities and roles that women and girls can and must play in an inclusive and sustainable stabilization effort.

5.4. Reintegration – Lessons from Ongoing Examples

This session noted the complexity of the issue of reintegrating former Boko Haram fighters. In Nigeria, Operation Safe Corridor was established to facilitate the de-radicalization, rehabilitation and reintegration of repentant former Boko Haram combatants. The initiative includes a screening process and risk profiling, individualized support and legal advice. While the military is responsible for coordination and security, civilian capacities provide thematic support in the camps. However, there are current challenges due to the reluctance of receiving communities to accept former Boko Haram fighters back into the communities. Finding a place to live in society for those who have finalized their formal reintegration programme is an issue that needs to be urgently addressed.

To increase capacities for reintegration within the Lake Chad Basin region, the international community supports the development and implementation of a comprehensive regional strategy for the screening, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of persons associated with Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin. This will require technical support for the development of national and state/regional-level action plans, including reliable judicial measures, the provision of technical and capacity-building support for civil society, as well as support to state-led reintegration programmes.

Civil society representatives highlighted the need to address the challenges resulting from the non-acceptance of former fighters, the stigmatization of those who demobilized and the widely spread fears arising from a lack of information on the reintegration process. Regarding the latter, measures to counter violent extremism and foster

religious tolerance should be established, and civil society, especially women and youth, should be engaged extensively. Youth, on the one hand, are vulnerable to Boko Haram recruitment due to disempowerment, lack of family support, drug abuse and poverty, but on the other hand, are part of the solution since they can work to prevent recruitment and to reintegrate demobilized youth.

Further efforts need to address challenging elements of reintegration, including stigmatization or the perception that support to former fighters is a 'reward' by many communities.

Recommendations:

- Support the process of jointly developing a regional reintegration strategy with action plans at the state/region level.
- Establish and ensure harmonization of National Action Plans for the reintegration of the Lake Chad Basin countries, including reliable judicial procedures with respect for human rights.
- Build capacities of state institutions responsible for reintegration.
- Engage the public in the reintegration process and prepare them through significant investments in dialogue and sensitization efforts.
- Prioritize the engagement of youth and women in reintegration efforts to ensure their active role in the reintegration process.

5.5. Reconciliation and Transitional Justice

Panel participants noted that reconciliation of society based on inclusive dialogue is a vital element of a regional strategy for stabilization, peacebuilding and peace consolidation. Being both a goal and a process, reconciliation envisages a balance between a painful past and a peaceful future by acknowledging, remembering and learning from the past. Reconciliation involves the hearts and minds of the community and therefore cannot be imposed or decided by government decree. Measures that contribute to reconciliation can be supported and enhanced by good political leadership to contribute to a shared vision of the future. Exemplary leadership has been shown in the context of recent successful reconciliation processes, such as in South Africa by the political leadership of Nelson Mandela and the spiritual leadership of Desmond Tutu. The important role of civil society leaders and the active participation of women and youth in reconciliation processes are highlighted by the case of Rwanda. While the country has suffered enormously, it is now at peace. The traditional grassroots court system of the *Gacaca* provided a platform for pursuing transitional justice through hearing offenders and giving them the chance to confess and ask for forgiveness. Speakers from the Interfaith Mediation Centre provided a powerful example of how reconciliation is possible even between groups who have formerly fought each other. They emphasized the importance of creating positive counter-narratives, which can contribute to dialogue and tolerance and prepare people for forgiveness.

While the Lake Chad Basin is not yet in a phase of reconciliation and transitional justice, and the ongoing conflict complicates reconciliation processes, the discussions highlighted some possible avenues that could be further explored to help begin the healing process, where appropriate. Experiences from Cameroon, for example, have shown that if women and men who have been victims and perpetrators of the Boko Haram insurgency are given opportunities, they can begin to rebuild their lives. Reconciliation at the community level also requires the engagement of traditional and religious leaders together with women and youth. Truth is another vital element of successful reconciliation, and transitional justice needs to find the right responses to the harm that has been committed. With respect to transitional justice, the judiciary needs to be provided with necessary capacities and

resources to address those who committed crimes during the Boko Haram insurgency. However, clear transitional justice measures still need to be defined within the countries affected by Boko Haram. In particular, minors and women who defect from the armed groups need specific measures and targeted support.

Recommendations:

- Provide leadership to support reconciliation processes.
- Support local and community-based capacities for dialogue and reconciliation.
- Engage traditional and religious leaders, women and youth in the development and implementation of reconciliation processes.
- Build capacities of the judiciary and establish a transitional justice system with clear judicial measures and resources for re-socialization and reintegration.
- Provide measures for trauma healing within the process of dealing with the past and truth finding.

5.6. Perspectives of Partners

Partners re-emphasized that a military approach alone cannot resolve the crisis, and noted that there is a need to contribute to community-driven stabilization, peacebuilding and development efforts. H.E. Fall noted that partners must continue supporting – and where possible, scale up – programming that focuses on stabilizing the region and promoting sustainable development. Ambassador Georg Schmidt stressed the imperative of understanding community needs and perspectives, and specifically pointed to the regional consultations undertaken by UNDP in the lead-up to the conference as a step in the right direction. Ambassador Jens-Petter Kjemprud, in turn, emphasized the need for local ownership of solutions to the crisis, particularly calling for the inclusion of women and youth for innovative and sustainable solutions.

Despite the importance of looking ahead and planning for longer-term processes, it is also important to recognize that many people still have significant needs that are not being adequately met. The INGO Forum noted this and pointed to the importance of expanding immediate life-saving assistance while addressing the root causes of the crisis and laying the foundations for longer-term developmental impact. Additionally, the INGO Forum argued that stabilization needs to be people-centered and must be informed by the underlying conflict and gender dynamics in order to ensure that responses are tailored to meet the specific needs of men, women, boys and girls in this context.

A recurring theme was that partnerships are essential to addressing the crisis. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 2349 (2017) highlighted the interconnected nature and complexity of the crisis including aspects such as environmental degradation, population growth and poverty as the underlying factors. Addressing these multifaceted challenges requires strong partnerships, and in this vein, the Forum marks an important step, because it fosters stronger collaboration and partnerships for coordinated action on stabilization in the region.

Recommendations:

- Strengthen collaboration between development partners and local governments.
- Provide for inclusive participation, especially by engaging women and youth in the development and implementation of programmes for peacebuilding and stabilization.
- Develop mechanisms to monitor the implementation of programmes and accountability.
- Address the economic, structural and climate-related root causes of the crisis.

5.7. Perspectives of the Governors: Listening to the Governors

The governors of the Forum pointed to many of the same challenges and opportunities that had been raised in earlier sessions of the two-day event. H.E. Kashim Shettima noted that the challenges were highly complex and interwoven, and bound together by endemic poverty and deprivation that are prevalent around Lake Chad. This calls for a holistic approach, and although the military plays an important role in establishing security, it cannot resolve this crisis alone. H.E. Sen. Mohammed Umar Jibrilla stressed the importance of engaging traditional institutions in the process of stabilization, since they are close to affected populations and understand the unique local context in which they operate. The importance of these institutions was also noted by H.E. Bakabe Mahamadou, who pointed out that traditional and religious institutions have a clear role to play in the stabilization process. He welcomed the idea of a regional road map to address the challenges. This sentiment was echoed by H.E. Midjiyawa Bakary, who called for an integrated, regional approach to stabilization of the Lake Chad Basin. Noting the successes of the MNJTF in the security domain, he pointed to the potential of such an approach in addressing some of the broader challenges of the region.

Despite the above efforts, however, it is important to recognize that Boko Haram continues to change its tactics. H.E. Djibrile Aboubakar noted that in the wake of suffering military defeats, the group is proving resilient and attempting to win local populations over in other ways. This calls for an urgently expanded and comprehensive regional response to the crisis, ensuring that the gains made by the military are sustained. With development a major short-coming across the region, addressing key development deficits in the medium term would lay a solid foundation for more sustainable development progress in the longer term.

The governors agreed that a regional roadmap would allow for the Lake Chad Basin region to advance together and avoid the spreading of Boko Haram. Such a roadmap could have significant preventive capacities even in areas that have not to date suffered from Boko Haram attacks. To ensure optimum impact, this roadmap would need to establish strong vertical linkages between the administrative and community levels in order to ensure relevance with the particular challenges faced at the grassroots level. This also implies improving the relations with the security forces. In closing, H.E. Dr. Chambas highlighted the need to form key partnerships towards a holistic solution for the Lake Chad Basin crisis. He also lauded the leadership of the governors in the region, which are at the centre of necessary actions to pave the way towards a more positive future, jointly with national, regional and international partners.

Recommendations:

- Urgently exchange best practices between partners and develop a holistic and community-based stabilization approach.
- Increase development measures in the communities to provide economic opportunities.
- Implement prevention measures in areas that have not yet been affected by Boko Haram.
- Engage communities in initiatives to improve development and security, especially in the border regions.
- Improve the relationship between communities and the security forces.

6. Next Steps

The success of the Forum hinges on its sustainability and relevance in advancing stabilization efforts in the region and help pave the way for peace and development. The governors agreed that the Forum should continue to play

such a role, but in order to do so it was also acknowledged that a number of steps need to be taken to build on the momentum generated from the inaugural meeting. In particular, it was noted that:

1. There is a need to continue regularly convening the Forum, with the next meeting holding in Niger by the end of the first quarter of 2019.
2. The governors would continue to use the Forum as a platform to foster regional cooperation on stabilization, peacebuilding and sustainable development for the region.
3. A dedicated team, led by UNDP, would be set up and support the Forum. The first task of this team would be to support the planning and preparations for the next Forum meeting in Niger.
4. The work of the Forum feeds into and supports the regional stabilization strategy being developed by the African Union and the LCBC.

These steps would ensure that the Forum is further consolidated amongst national, regional and international partners, and begins to play the critical role in the stabilization of the region as is envisaged.

7. Conclusions

The Forum recognized the extensive efforts made in addressing the crisis in the Lake Chad Basin by the respective national governments, multilateral institutions and local communities. It also acknowledged United Nations Security Council Resolution 2349 (2017) on Boko Haram and Lake Chad, together with the call to “take further measures to address social, political, economic and gender inequalities, and environmental challenges, and to develop strategies to counter violent extremist narrative that can incite terrorist acts, and address the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism”. In this regard, the Forum pledged to complement and support ongoing efforts by the African Union and the LCBC working closely with other partners to develop and implement the Regional Stabilization Strategy for the Lake Chad sub-region. It recognized and appreciated the extensive regional consultations that UNDP had undertaken with local communities across the four countries around Lake Chad, and committed to use the Forum to foster and advocate for a bottom-up approach to stabilization, peacebuilding and sustainable development in the Lake Chad region.

In conclusion, bearing in mind the overall purpose and objective of the inaugural Forum meeting, its set objectives were achieved. First, it drew political and public attention to the complex root causes of the present crisis and the importance of strengthening regional cooperation on stabilization, peacebuilding and conflict prevention as a foundation for medium- to long-term sustainable development in the Lake Chad Basin. Accordingly, governors of the region will continue to convene the Forum, using it as a means to drive the sub-national stabilization agenda for the region. Second, the Forum highlighted the important roles that traditional and religious leaders, women and youth all play in the stabilization and peacebuilding process. There is thus a need to ensure that any stabilization and peacebuilding solutions for the Lake Chad sub-region include these groups to ensure ownership and sustainability. Third, the Forum agreed to adopt a bottom-up approach and ensure the inclusion and participation of affected communities and populations across the Lake Chad Basin. Local voices must be heard, and these voices must have the agency to help shape a collective vision for a more peaceful and prosperous future in the Lake Chad region.

It is envisaged that the Lake Chad Basin Governors’ Forum will become a long-term mechanism and increase national, regional and international support for the recovery, rehabilitation, reintegration and reconstruction processes in the Lake Chad Basin. In this regard, the Forum agreed that UNDP would continue to support its

meetings in close collaboration with the Lake Chad Basin Commission and other key partners. The Governors agreed that the next meeting would be held by the end of the first quarter of 2019 in Niger.

Annex I – Statement of Declaration

Lake Chad Basin Governors’ Forum For Regional Cooperation on Stabilization, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development in the Region Affected by Boko Haram

Statement of Declaration

We, Governors of the Lake Chad Basin, representing States and Regions from Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, are gathered here today to formally declare the official launch of the Lake Chad Basin Governors’ Forum, aimed at fostering Regional Cooperation on Stabilization, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development.

The Forum shall serve as a platform for our regular consultation and coordination of efforts, with the aim of working together to bring about lasting solutions to our common cross-border challenges.

In this work, we welcome the opportunity to establish and develop new partnerships with local, national, regional and international stakeholders as we work towards a prosperous and peaceful future for the Lake Chad Basin.

We thank you.

Made on this 8th day of May 2018, in Maiduguri, Borno State, Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Annex II – Joint Communiqué

Lake Chad Basin Governors’ Forum For Regional Cooperation on Stabilization, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development in the region affected by Boko Haram

Joint Communiqué of the Inaugural Meeting

(final version of 9 May 2018)

1. The Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum for Regional Cooperation on Stabilization, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development was formally declared launched by H.E. Senator Mohammed Umar Jibrilla, the Governor of Adamawa State, on May 8th, 2018, on behalf of Governors of the Lake Chad Basin. The Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum for Regional Cooperation on Stabilization, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development in the region affected by Boko Haram, hereafter referred to as the Forum, held its inaugural meeting on the 8th and 9th of May 2018, in Maiduguri, Borno State, Federal Republic of Nigeria. The inaugural meeting of the Forum was hosted by the Governor of Borno State, H.E. Kashim Shettima, and supported by the United Nations through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as well as the Governments of Germany, Sweden and Norway. The inaugural meeting was formally addressed by H.E. Muhammadu Buhari GCFR, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, ably represented by the Governor of Borno State, H.E. Kashim Shettima, in the presence of Governors from Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria as well as officials from the United Nations, African Union, multilateral and bilateral partners, representatives of civil society and the media.
2. The Forum recognizes the extensive efforts that have already gone into addressing the crisis in the Lake Chad Basin by the respective national governments, multilateral institutions, and local communities. The Forum also specifically acknowledges the UN Security Council Resolution 2349 (2017) on Boko Haram and Lake Chad, and the call to "take further measures to address social, political, economic and gender inequalities, and environmental challenges, and to develop strategies to counter the violent extremist narrative that can incite terrorist acts, and address the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism...".
3. The Forum recognizes and appreciates the extensive regional consultations with local communities across the four countries around Lake Chad, and will continue to engage with communities to hear their voices and consider their recommendations.
4. In light of these processes, the Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum for Regional Cooperation on Stabilization, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development met on 8th and 9th of May 2018 and agrees on the following:
 - i. To formally constitute the Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum, which will act as a platform for fostering regional cooperation on stabilization, peacebuilding and sustainable development for the region affected by the Boko Haram crisis;
 - ii. That the Forum will serve to enhance joint efforts towards stabilizing, building peace and fostering sustainable development across the Lake Chad Basin through promoting dialogue and cross-border design and exchange of information and crisis response solutions;
 - iii. That the preparation of each Forum be supported by a designated team led by UNDP that would act in close collaboration with the Hosting Governor, the Lake Chad Basin Commission as well as international partners, to assist with logistical and substantive support;
 - iv. To regularly convene the Forum, at least annually, and that the hosting of the Forum should rotate between governors in the four countries in the spirit of equal and shared ownership;
 - v. That the Forum will serve as a veritable contribution to the Lake Chad Basin's path towards stabilization, peace and sustainable development;
 - vi. That a community-based approach is essential to ensuring sustainability and ownership of solutions to the Boko Haram crisis in the Lake Chad Basin;

- vii. To use the Forum to promote a bottom-up approach to stabilization and peacebuilding of the Lake Chad Basin. It was further recognized that communities have identified traditional and religious institutions, women and young people as essential to charting a path towards stabilization and peace, and the Forum therefore resolves to include such groups in its regular consultations and meetings;
 - viii. To leverage the Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum as a means to specifically address sub-national cross-border challenges and opportunities to provide a better life for all those who live in the Lake Chad Basin and depend on it for survival;
 - ix. To support ongoing national, regional and multilateral efforts towards stabilization of the Lake Chad Basin, notably the ongoing efforts by the African Union Commission and the Lake Chad Basin Commission to develop a Regional Stabilization Strategy, as well as supporting the efforts of restoring the Lake Chad waters as part of a long-term solution to ensure sustainable development of the region.
5. The Forum expresses its appreciation to H.E. President Buhari and the people of Nigeria; and the host Governor, H.E. Kashim Shettima, for the hospitality; his counterparts and co-chair Governors of the States/Regions around the Lake Chad Basin; the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Office to West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), UN Office to Central Africa (UNOCA), for the technical and secretarial support for planning, facilitation and organizing of the Forum, in close collaboration with the African Union (AU), Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). The Forum also wishes to extend its appreciation to the Governments of Germany, Sweden and Norway for their support, as well as to other multilateral, regional and bilateral partners here present during the inaugural meeting.
 6. In addition, the Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum agreed that the next meeting would hold by the end of the first quarter of 2019 in Niger.

Done on this 9th day of May 2018, in Maiduguri, Borno State, Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Annex III – Conference Programme

Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum For Regional Cooperation on Stabilization, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development in the Region Affected by Boko Haram

Conference Programme

8-9 May 2018, Maiduguri, Borno State House

Day 1	
9:00–10:00	Registration

Session 1	Opening Ceremony
10:00–10:10	Observing all Protocols by His Excellency, Ambassador Mamman Nuhu, Executive Secretary, Lake Chad Basin Commission
10:10–10:15	Welcoming Remarks by His Excellency, Kashim Shettima, Governor of Borno State, represented by Professor Babagana Umara Zulum, Honourable Commissioner for Borno State Ministry for Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement
10:15–10:20	Welcoming Remarks by Mr. Edward Kallon, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Nigeria
10:20–10:23	Remarks by His Excellency, Midjiyawa Bakary, Governor of the Far North Region
10:23–10:26	Remarks by His Excellency, Mahamat Abali Sallah, Governor of Lac
10:26–10:29	Remarks by His Excellency, Bakabe Mahamadou, Governor of Diffa
10:29–10:32	Remarks by His Excellency, Ambassador Georg Schmidt, Africa Director of the German Foreign Office
10:32– 10:35	Remarks by Mr. Daniel Wolvén, Director and Deputy Head of Africa Department, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs
10:35–10:38	Remarks by Her Excellency, Ambassador Birgitte Markussen, Deputy Managing Director Africa, European External Action Service, European Union
10:38–10:41	Remarks by Her Excellency, Ambassador Zaina Nyiramata, Special Representative of the African Union Commission to the Lake Chad Basin Commission, represented by Mr. Frank Dakouri, Senior Humanitarian and Liaison Officer and MNJTF Focal Point for the African Union in N'Djamena on Stabilization Strategy
10:41–10:44	Remarks by His Excellency, Dr. Ibn Chambas, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel
10:44–10:47	Remarks by His Excellency, François Louncény Fall, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa
	Official Opening Address by His Excellency, Muhammadu Buhari GCFR, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, represented by His Excellency, Kashim Shettima, Governor of Borno State
11:10–11:20	VIP Photo Session
11:20–11:50	Tea Break
Session 2	Overview of Stabilization in the Lake Chad Basin
11:50–12:00	Introduction of Session 2, by Ms. Adedayo Benjamins-Laniyi
12:00–12:20	Security and Military Situation Update in the Lake Chad Basin, by Maj. Gen. Leo Irabor, Force Commander, Multi-National Joint Task Force
12:20–12:40	Humanitarian Situation Update in the Lake Chad Basin, by Mr. Roel Debruyne, Protection Specialist, OCHA Regional Office
12:40–13:00	Community Perspectives on Stabilization in the Lake Chad Basin, by Mr. Samuel Bwalya, Country Director, UNDP Nigeria
13:00–13:30	Panel Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – His Excellency, Midjiyawa Bakary, Governor of Extreme-Nord (Chair) – Mr. Ahmed Shehu, Executive Director Network of CSOs Borno State and Regional Coordinator for the CSO Network for the Lake Chad Basin (Co-Chair) – Mr. Abubakar Ibn Umar Garbai Al-Amin El-Kanemi, Shehu of Borno – Maj. Gen. Leo Irabor, Force Commander, Multi-National Joint Task Force – Mr. Roel Debruyne, Protection Specialist, OCHA Regional Office – Mr. Samuel Bwalya, Country Director, UNDP Nigeria
13:30–14:30	Lunch

Session 3		Thematic Discussions – Regional Stabilization of the Lake Chad Basin
14:30–14:40	Introduction of Session 3, by Ms. Adedayo Benjamins-Laniyi	
14:40–16:00	Thematic Panel Discussion – Regional Stabilization	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – His Excellency, Mahamat Abali Sallah, Governor of Lac (Chair) – His Excellency, Ambassador Mamman Nuhu, Executive Secretary, Lake Chad Basin Commission (Co-Chair) – Her Excellency, Ambassador Zaina Nyiramata, Special Representative of the African Union Commission to the Lake Chad Basin Commission, represented by Mr. Frank Dakouri, Senior Humanitarian and Liaison Officer and MNJTF Focal Point for the African Union in N'Djamena for the Stabilization Strategy – Mr. Constance Gnacadja, Programme Manager for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Early Response, Economic Community of West African States – Ms. Fatima Askira, Executive Director, Borno Women Development Initiative 	
16:00–17:20	Thematic Panel Discussion – Reintegration (Examples of ongoing initiatives)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – His Excellency, Bakabe Mahamadou, Governor of Diffa (Chair) – Mr. Simon Ridley, Officer in Charge Governance and Peacebuilding, UNDP Regional Service Centre (Co-Chair) – Ms. Zara Mohammed, Youth Development Association – Mr. Fernando Medina, Stabilization, Transition, Recovery and Reintegration Officer, International Organization for Migration – Colonel Adetuyi, Commandant, De-Radicalization and Reintegration Camp, Operation Safe Corridor 	
17:20–17:30	Recapitulation of Day 1 by Ms. Adedayo Benjamins-Laniyi	
17:30–20:00	Free Time	
20:00–21:30	Dinner Reception hosted by His Excellency Kashim Shettima, Governor of Borno State (at the State House)	
21:30	Return to Accommodation	
Day 2		
8:45–9:00	Recapitulation of Day 1 and Introduction of Session 4, by Ms. Adedayo Benjamins-Laniyi	
09:00–10:00	Thematic Panel Discussion – Reconciliation and Transitional Justice (Examples of ongoing initiatives)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – His Excellency, Alhaji Ibrahim Geidam, Governor of Yobe State, represented by Engr. Mohammad Suraj Wakili, Honourable Commissioner for Yobe State Ministry of Water Resources (Chair) – Ambassador Nicolas Bwakira, Senior Adviser for Africa, Crisis Management Initiative (Co-Chair) – Ms. Wandou Marthe, Chairwoman of <i>Action Locale pour un Développement Participatif et Autogéré</i> (ALDEPA) – Pastor Wuye, Chief of Party, Interfaith Mediation Centre – Imam Ashafa, Deputy Chief of Party, Interfaith Mediation Centre – Ms. Maidama Hadiza Malam Manzo, Niamey Tribunal 	
Session 4		A Way Forward – Reflections on Challenges and Opportunities
10:00–11:00	Perspectives of Partners in Stabilization of the Lake Chad Basin	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – His Excellency, François Louncény Fall, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa (Chair) 	

- His Excellency, Ambassador Georg Schmidt, Africa Director, German Foreign Office (Co-Chair)
- His Excellency, Ambassador Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations
- His Excellency, Ambassador Jens-Petter Kjemprud, Ambassador, Royal Norwegian Embassy to Nigeria
- Ms. Joanna Garbalinska, Acting Director, Nigeria INGO Forum
- Mr. Tom Mugoya, Principal Water and Sanitation Engineer, African Development Bank

11:00-11:30	Tea Break
11:30-12:30	<p>Listening to the Governors – Challenges and Opportunities for Stabilization in the Lake Chad Basin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - His Excellency, Kashim Shettima, Governor of Borno State (Chair) - His Excellency, Dr. Ibn Chambas, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel (Co-Chair) - His Excellency, Alhaji Ibrahim Geidam, Governor of Yobe State, represented by Engr. Mohammad Suraj Wakili, Honourable Commissioner for Yobe State Ministry of Water Resources - His Excellency, Senator Mohammed Umar Jibrilla, Governor of Adamawa State - His Excellency, Midjiyawa Bakary, Governor of Extreme-Nord - His Excellency, Aboubakar Djibrile Aboubakar, Governor of Hadjer-Lamis - His Excellency, Mahamat Abali Sallah, Governor of Lac - His Excellency, Bakabe Mahamadou, Governor of Diffa - His Excellency, Issa Moussa, Governor of Zinder
Session 5	Closing Ceremony
12:30-12:40	Reading of the Joint Communiqué of the Lake Chad Basin Governors’ Forum, by Prof. Babagana Umara Zulum, Honourable Commissioner for Borno State Ministry for Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement
12:40-12:50	Closing Remarks by His Excellency, Kashim Shettima, Governor of Borno State
12:50-13:00	Closing Remarks by Mr. Edward Kallon, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Nigeria
13:00-13:10	Vote of Thanks by His Excellency, Bakabe Mahamadou, Governor of Diffa
13:10-13:30	Press Conference
13:30-14:00	Lunch
14:00	Departure

Annex IV – List of Participants

Category	Name	Designation	Organization
<i>Nigeria Governors' Delegation</i>			
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	H.E. Mr. Kashim Shettima	Governor	Borno State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	H.E. Alhaji Usman Mamman Durkwa	Deputy Governor	Borno State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Arch. Yerima Saleh	Head of Service	Borno State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Alhaji Modu Alhaji Musa	Chief of Staff to the Governor	Borno State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Alhaji Usman Jidda Shuwa	Secretary to the State Government	Borno State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Alhaji Abubakar Ibn Umar Garbai Al-Amin El-Kanemi	Shehu of Borno	Borno State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Hon. Musa Inuwa Kubo	Hon. Commissioner	Borno State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Hon. Adamu Alhaji Lawan	Hon. Commissioner	Borno State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Hon. Babagana Tijjani Banki	Hon. Commissioner	Borno State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Hon. Sugun Mai-Mele	Hon. Commissioner	Borno State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Hon. Mustapha M. Fannarambe	Hon. Commissioner	Borno State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Prof. Babagana Umara Zulum	Hon. Commissioner	Borno State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Hon. Fanta Baba Shehu	Hon. Commissioner	Borno State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Hon. Ahmed Usman Jaha	Hon. Commissioner	Borno State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Hon. Zainab Gimba	Hon. Commissioner	Borno State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Hon. Yerima Lawan Kareto	Hon. Commissioner	Borno State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Hon. Inna Galadima	Hon. Commissioner	Borno State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Dr. Mohammed Bulama	Hon. Commissioner	Borno State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Hon. Mohammed Dili	Hon. Commissioner	Borno State Government

Category	Name	Designation	Organization
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Hon. Danlami Inuwa Kubo	Hon. Member Borno State House of Assembly	Borno State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Hon. Dige Mohammed	Hon. Member Borno State House of Assembly	Borno State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Hon. Aimu Foni	Hon. Member Borno State House of Assembly	Borno State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Hon. Audu Mustapaha	Hon. Member Borno State House of Assembly	Borno State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Ms. Hajiya Yabawa Kolo	Chairperson	Borno State Emergency Management Agency
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Engr. Satomi Ahmed	Chairperson	Borno State Road Maintenance Agency
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Mr. Alhaji Baba Mallam Wali	Secretary to the State Government	Yobe State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Engr. Mohammad Suraj Wakili	Commissioner, Ministry of Water Resources	Yobe State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Mr. Yahaya Barde	Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources	Yobe State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Mr. Bila Ali	Official of Ministry of Water Resources	Yobe State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Mr. Abdullahi Audu	Official of Ministry of Water Resources	Yobe State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Mr. Mohammad Dapchi	Official of Ministry of Water Resources	Yobe State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Ms. Aisha Wali	Desk Officer, Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development	Yobe State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	H.E. Senator Mohammed Umar Jibrilla	Governor	Adamawa State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Hon. Kevin Peter	Special Adviser on Special Duties	Adamawa State Government
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Mr. Marcurley Hunohashi	Special Assistant, Media and Publicity	Adamawa State Government
<i>Cameroon Governors' Delegation</i>			
Cameroon Governors' Delegation	H.E. Mr. Bakari Midjiyawa	Governor	Far North Regional Government (Gouvernorat de la region de l'Extrême Nord)
Cameroon Governors' Delegation	Mr. Oumar Bichar	Senior Administrative Officer and Inspector General (Administrateur Civil Principal & Inspecteur Général)	Services Régionaux de l'Extrême-Nord

Category	Name	Designation	Organization
Cameroon Governors' Delegation	Ms. Marthe Wandou	Chairperson	Action Locale pour un Développement Participatif et Autogéré (ALDEPA)
<i>Chad Governors' Delegation</i>			
Chad Governors' Delegation	H.E Mr. Aboubakar Djibrile Aboubakar	Governor	Hadjer Lamis Regional Government (Gouvernorat de la Région du Hadjer Lamis)
Chad Governors' Delegation	Mr. Moudjahid Hamit	Interpreter	Hadjer Lamis Regional Government (Gouvernorat de la Région du Hadjer Lamis)
Chad Governors' Delegation	H.E. Mr. Mahamat Abali Sallah	Governor	Lac Regional Government (Gouvernorat de la Région du Lac)
Chad Governors' Delegation	Mr. Abakar Mahamat Kaïla	Chair of the Committee	Committee for the Development Plan for Lac Region (Comité d'élaboration du plan de développement de la région du Lac)
Chad Governors' Delegation	Mr. Tegnara Passoret Jonas	Head of Statistic Services	Ministry of Land Administration, Public Safety and Local Governance (Ministère de l'Administration du Territoire, de la sécurité publique et de la gouvernance locale)
<i>Niger Governors' Delegation</i>			
Niger Governors' Delegation	H.E. Mr. Bakabe Mahamadou	Governor	Government of Diffa (Gouvernorat de Diffa)
Niger Governors' Delegation	H.E. Mr. Issa Moussa	Governor	Government of Zinder (Gouvernorat Zinder)
Niger Governors' Delegation	Mr. Mairou Ligari	President of the Regional Council of Diffa	Regional Council of Diffa (Conseil Régional de Diffa)
Niger Governors' Delegation	Ms. Maidama Hadiza Malam Manzo	Public Prosecutor of the Anti-terrorism Centre	Niamey Courts (Tribunal de Niamey)
Niger Governors' Delegation	Mr. Lawali Ada	Executive Secretary	SDS
Niger Governors' Delegation	Mr. Abdoulaye Aidara	Director of Territorial Administration	Ministry of Interior (Ministère de l'Intérieur)

Category	Name	Designation	Organization
Niger Governors' Delegation	Mr. Clément Kocou Gbedey	National Coordinator	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
<i>Borno State Service Chiefs</i>			
Borno State Service Chiefs	Mr. Damian Chukwu	Police Commissioner	Nigerian Police Force
Borno State Service Chiefs	Mr. Sulaiman Hussaini	Director of State Security Service	State Security Service
Borno State Service Chiefs	Wing Commander M.B Umar	Nigerian Air Force Commander 105	Nigerian Air Force
Borno State Service Chiefs	Mr. Ambalaga J.J.	Comptroller of Customs	Nigerian Customs Service
Borno State Service Chiefs	Mr. Adamu Alhaji Abdulfattah	Comptroller of Immigration	Nigerian Immigration Service
Borno State Service Chiefs	Mr. Inuwa Garba	Comptroller of Prisons	Nigerian Prison Service
Borno State Service Chiefs	Mr. Abdullahi Ibrahim	Commander of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps	Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps
Borno State Service Chiefs	Mr. Umar El-Farooq Bello	Commander of the Federal Road Safety Corps	Federal Road Safety Corps
Borno State Service Chiefs	Maj. Gen. Roger Nicholas	Theatre Commander	Operation Lafiya Dole
Borno State Service Chiefs	Maj. Gen Ibrahim Manu Yusuf	GOC 7 Div.	Nigerian Army
Borno State Service Chiefs	Brig. J.G Muhammed	Garrison Commander	Nigerian Army
Borno State Service Chiefs	Air Vice-Marshall Idi Lubo	Commander Air Task Force	Nigerian Air Force
<i>Nigeria Federal/National Representation</i>			
Nigeria	Col. Adegoke Adetuyi	Commandant, De-Radicalization Rehabilitation and Reintegration Camp	Operation Safe Corridor
Nigeria	Ms. Zainab Zakari-Awami	Senior Counsellor	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria
Nigeria	H. E. Prof. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande	Ambassador/Permanent Representative	Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations
Nigeria	Mr. Alexander Temitope Ajayi	Minister – 3 rd Committee	Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations
Nigeria Governors' Delegation	Senator Ahmed H. Barata	Senator, Adamawa South Senatorial District	National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
<i>Regional Organizations</i>			
Regional Organizations	H.E. Mr. Mamman Nuhu	Executive Secretary	Lake Chad Basin Commission
Regional Organizations	Major-General Leo Irabor	Force Commander	Multinational Joint Task Force

Category	Name	Designation	Organization
Regional Organizations	Mr. Gbaka Frank Donatien Dakouri	Senior Humanitarian Officer	African Union Commission
Regional Organizations	Col. B.A Muhammadu	Defence Adviser	Nigerian Embassy, Chad
Regional Organizations	Mr. Constant Gnacadja	Programme Officer, Conflict Prevention	Economic Commission of West African States
<i>Diplomatic & International Partners</i>			
Diplomatic & International Partners	H.E. Mr. Georg Schmidt	Africa Director	German Federal Foreign Office
Diplomatic & International Partners	Ms. Maya Krille	Programme Officer, Stabilization	German Federal Foreign Office
Diplomatic & International Partners	Ms. Sophia Sabrow	Political Officer	German Embassy to Nigeria
Diplomatic & International Partners	Mr. Daniel Wolvén	Director and Deputy Head of Africa Department	Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Diplomatic & International Partners	Mr. John Skoglund	Desk Officer, Africa Department	Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Diplomatic & International Partners	Mr. Peter Lundberg	Deputy Director and Senior Adviser on the Lake Chad Region	Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Diplomatic & International Partners	H.E. Ms. Birgitte Markussen	Deputy Managing Director Africa – European External Action Service (EEAS)	European Union
Diplomatic & International Partners	Ambassador Kurt Cornelis	Head of Cooperation	Delegation of the European Union to Nigeria and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
Diplomatic & International Partners	Mr. José-Antonio Torres-Lacasa	West Africa, Policy Officer – EEAS	European Union
Diplomatic & International Partners	H.E. Mr. Jens-Petter Kjemprud	Ambassador	Royal Norwegian Embassy
Diplomatic & International Partners	Ms. Marie Lendeby Grepstad	First Secretary	Royal Norwegian Embassy
Diplomatic & International Partners	Mr. Stephen Haykin	Mission Director	United States Agency for International Development
Diplomatic & International Partners	Ms. Katherine Dillon	Program Officer – United States Agency for International Development Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance	United States Agency for International Development

Category	Name	Designation	Organization
Diplomatic & International Partners	Ms. Amelia Cantor	Political-Military Officer	United States Agency for International Development
Diplomatic & International Partners	H.E. Mr. Eric Mayoraz	Ambassador	Embassy of Switzerland in Nigeria
Diplomatic & International Partners	Mr. Pascal Holliger	Political Adviser	Embassy of Switzerland in Nigeria
Diplomatic & International Partners	Mr. Harry Putker	First Secretary	Embassy of the Netherlands in Nigeria
Diplomatic & International Partners	Mr. Guillaume Audran de Kerdrel	First Counsellor	Embassy of France in Nigeria
Diplomatic & International Partners	Mr. Yann ROBOAM	Liaison Officer to the Defence Attaché	Embassy of France in Nigeria
Diplomatic & International Partners	Mr. Juan Paya Bover	First Secretary	Embassy of Spain in Nigeria
Diplomatic & International Partners	Mr. John Crysler	First Secretary	High Commission of Canada in Nigeria
Diplomatic & International Partners	H.E. Mr. Seán Hoy	Ambassador	Embassy of Ireland in Nigeria
Diplomatic & International Partners	Mr. Musa Salmanu	Humanitarian Officer	Embassy of Ireland in Nigeria
Diplomatic & International Partners	H.E. Ms. Pirjo Suomela-Chowdhury	Ambassador	Embassy of Finland in Nigeria
Diplomatic & International Partners	Dr. Kabura Zakama	Team Lead, Humanitarian and North-East Team	Department for International Development
Diplomatic & International Partners	Ms. Mary Morrison	Coordinator for North-East Nigeria Programme	World Bank
Diplomatic & International Partners	Mr. Tom Mugoya	Principal Water and Sanitation Engineer	African Development Bank
<i>Civil Society Stakeholders</i>			
Civil Society Stakeholders	Ms. Joanna Garbalinska	Acting Director	INGO Consortium-Nigeria
Civil Society Stakeholders	Mr. Ballama Mustafa	Senior Liaison Adviser	INGO Consortium-Nigeria
Civil Society Stakeholders	Mr. Ahmed Shehu	Regional Coordinator	CSO Network for Lake Chad Basin
Civil Society Stakeholders	Ms. Zara Mohamed	Representative	Youth Development Association
Civil Society Stakeholders	Imam Dr. Muhammad Nurayn Ashafa	Co-Executive Director	Interfaith Mediation Center

Category	Name	Designation	Organization
Civil Society Stakeholders	Pastor Dr. James Movel Wuye	Co-Executive Director	Interfaith Mediation Center
Civil Society Stakeholders	Ms. Fatima Askira	Executive Director	Borno Women's Development Initiative
Civil Society Stakeholders	Mr. Beat Armin Mosimann	Head of Sub-Delegation	International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
<i>United Nations</i>			
United Nations	Mr. Edward Kallon	United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian, and UNDP Resident Representative	United Nations in Nigeria
United Nations	Mr. Frederic Eno	Special Assistant	United Nations Resident Coordinators' Office Nigeria
United Nations	Mr. Martin Ejidike	Senior Human Rights Adviser	United Nations/OHCHR Nigeria
United Nations	Mr. Samuel Bwalya	Country Director	UNDP Nigeria
United Nations	Mr. Joerg Kuehnel	Deputy Country Director –Programme	UNDP Nigeria
United Nations	Mr. Simon Ridley	Officer in Charge a.i., Rule of Law, Human Rights and Conflict Prevention	UNDP Regional Support Centre
United Nations	H.E. Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas	United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel	United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS)
United Nations	Ms. Falmata Liman	Political Affairs Officer	United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS)
United Nations	Ms. Madjiguene Dia	Political Affairs Officer	United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS)
United Nations	Ms. Roswitha Kremser	Political Affairs Officer	United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS)
United Nations	H.E. Mr. François Fall	United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa	United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA)
United Nations	Col. Cheikh Tidiane Mbodji	Senior Military Adviser	United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA)
United Nations	Mr. Roel Debruyne	Protection Specialist	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) West and Central Africa (ROWCA)
United Nations	Ms. Edem Wosornu	Head of Office	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

Category	Name	Designation	Organization
United Nations	Mr. Cyprien Gangnon	Project Manager and Head of Maroua Field Office	UNDP Cameroon
United Nations	Ms. Hiroko Konno	Resources Mobilization and Communication Specialist	UNDP Cameroon
United Nations	Mr. Abdoulaye Baldé	Chief Technical Advisor on Peace and Security	UNDP Niger
United Nations	Ms. Aissa Riba Alhabo	Head of Resources Mobilization	UNDP Niger
United Nations	Mr. Osu Inya Out	National Programme Officer –Science	United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO)
United Nations	Mr. Mohamed Fall	Representative	United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
United Nations	Mr. Valere Nzeyimana	Land and Water Officer	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
United Nations	Mr. Mohammad Azim Arshad	Project Officer	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
United Nations	Mr. Alhaji Mustapha	Energy Expert	United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
United Nations	Mr. Fernando Medina	Stabilization, Transition, Recovery and Reintegration Officer	International Organization for Migration (IOM)
United Nations	Mr. Yassine Gaba	Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
United Nations	Mr. Crispen Rukasha	Deputy Head of Office	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
United Nations	Mr. Geoffrey Ijumba	Chief Field Officer	United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
United Nations	Mr. Ada Pouye	Humanitarian Coordinator/Head of Office	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
United Nations	Dr. Adandji Yaoklou	Health Sector Coordinator	World Health Organization (WHO)
United Nations	Mr. Tito Nikodimos	North-East Nigeria Director of Operation	World Food Programme (WFP)
United Nations	Ms. Njeri Karuru	Programme Manager, Women in Peace and Security	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)
<i>Members of the Press</i>			
Press	Mr. Umeh Kanayo	Reporter	The Guardian Newspaper

Category	Name	Designation	Organization
Press	Mr. Joshua Odeyemi	Editor	Daily Trust Newspaper
Press	Mr. Bilyaminu Yusuf	Reporter	Radio France Internationale (RFI)
Press	Ms. Blessing Tunoh	Reporter	Channels TV
Press	Mr. Mohammed Abubakar	Camera operator	Channels TV
Press	Mr. Mohammed Al-Amin	Reporter	Deutsche Welle Radio Germany
Press	Mr. Ahmed Idris	Reporter	Al Jazeera Television Network
Press	Mr. Ali Mustafa	Camera operator	Aljazeera Satellite Network
Press	Mr. Timothy Olanrewaju	Reporter	Reuters/The Sun Newspapers
Press	Mr. Aregbesola Isaac	Reporter	News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)
Press	Mr. Aminu Abubakar	Reporter	Agence France-Presse
Press	Ms. Nana Mohammed	Reporter	The Triumph
Press	Mr. Audu Abba Kurama	Camera operator	Voice of America TV
Press	Mr. Audu Ali Marte	Camera operator	Agence France Presse
Press	Ms. Ryan Brown	Reporter	The Christian Science Monitor
Press	Ms. Golfa Francis	Editor	Voice of Nigeria
Press	Mr. Michael Olugbode	Reporter	ThisDay Newspaper
Press	Mr. Sadiq Abubakar	Editor	Blueprint Newspapers/The Nigerian Voice Online Newspaper
Press	Mr. Ismail Alfa Abdulrahim	Reporter	Associated Press
Press	Mr. Babagana Bukar	Reporter	Dandal Kura Radio Int.
Press	Mr. Dauda Iliya	Reporter	Radio Nigeria Network
Press	Mr. Mohammed Shettima	Reporter	Peace FM Radio
Press	Mr. Patrick Mark	Reporter	African Independent Television (AIT)
Press	Mr. Mohammed Abba Gulumba	Camera operator	African Independent Television (AIT)
Press	Mr. Abdullahi Abdulrazak	Camera operator	Niger
Press	Press Crew	Reporter	Nigeria Television Authority Government House
Press	Press Crew	Reporter	Borno Radio Television (BRTV) Government House

Category	Name	Designation	Organization
Press	Press Crew	Camera operator	Borno Radio Television (BRTV) Government House
Press	Mr. Kolawole Adewale	Camera operator/reporter	Reuters
<i>Members of the Secretariat</i>			
Secretariat	Mr. Ibrahima Barry	Secretariat Team Leader	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
Secretariat	Mr. Adam Bergman	Substantive Preparations Team Coordinator	United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office Nigeria
Secretariat	Ms. Sally Musa	Logistics/Protocol Team Coordinator	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Ms. Janna Greve	Project Manager	Crisis Management Initiative
Secretariat	Ms. Maria Ristimäki	Project Officer	Crisis Management Initiative
Secretariat	Ambassador Nicolas Bwakira	Senior Adviser	Crisis Management Initiative
Secretariat	Mr. Chaste Umeh	Programme Associate	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Mr. Lucky Musonda	Communication Specialist	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Ms. Laura Rutishauser	Policy Analyst, Governance and Peacebuilding	UNDP New York
Secretariat	Mr. Williams Alao	National Security Officer	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Dr. Zebulon Takwa	Peace and Development Adviser	United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office Nigeria
Secretariat	Ms. Ida Höckerfelt	Second Secretary	Embassy of Sweden in Abuja
Secretariat	Mr. Jonathan Sandy	Adviser	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Mr. Anthony Omata	Programme Associate	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Ms. Grace Arinze	Economics Research Assistant	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Mr. Eldridge Adolfo	Senior Mediation Adviser	Folke Bernadotte Academy
Secretariat	Ms. Eno Jonathan	Communication Analyst	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Ms. Sylvia Opinia	GBV Sub-Sector Coordinator	UNFPA Nigeria
Secretariat	Ms. Mizuho Yokoi	Head of Sub-Office	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Mr. Sadiq Hamidu	Finance Associate	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Mr. Ahmed Mohammed Audu	Office Clerk	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Mr. Ismail Bukar	Area Coordinator	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Mr. Adam Bababe	Area Coordinator	UNDP Nigeria

Category	Name	Designation	Organization
Secretariat	Mr. Roy Tor Bem	Programme Associate	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Mr. Joseph Shopade	Monitoring and Reporting Officer	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Mr. Jacob Billiyok	Field Security Associate	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Mr. Peter Mefor	Human Rights Officer	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Ms. Fatima M. Abba	Deputy Director, Protocol	Borno State
Secretariat	Mr. Mohammed Mahmud	Special Assistant on State and Welfare Programme to H.E. Borno Governor	Borno State
Secretariat	Mr. Habu Kale Tijani	Special Assistant on State and Welfare Programme to H.E. Borno Governor	Borno State
Secretariat	Dr. Ibrahim Wujema	Special Assistant on State and Welfare Programme to H.E. Borno Governor	Borno State
Secretariat	Ms. Fatima Abdullahi	Representative State Emergency Management Agency	Borno State
Secretariat	Ms. Adedayo Benjamins-Laniyi	Moderator	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Dr. Dayo Kusa	Rapporteur	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Mr. Lawrence Adesanya	Interpreter	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Mr. Joseph Fagbohun	Interpreter	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Mr. Adanvoessi Fawaz	Interpreter	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Mr. Saah Clotaire	Interpreter	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Mr. Paulinus Umah	Translator	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Mr. Emmanouel Tiekou	Translator	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Mr. Adesanya Obashola	Technician	UNDP Nigeria
Secretariat	Ms. Faustina Kazzah	Technician	UNDP Nigeria

Annex V – Discussion Paper

Perspectives from Local Communities on Stabilization and Building Peace in the Lake Chad Basin

Discussion Paper
Presented at the Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum
8-9 May 2018
Maiduguri, Nigeria

A report from UNDP building on consultations in Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria

Executive Summary

This paper synthesizes the outcomes of over 100 focus group discussions held with over 1,100 people in the four riparian countries of Lake Chad affected by the Boko Haram insurgency – Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. Consultations were conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)⁶ with different segments of the population (women, men and youth) in March and April 2018, based on a uniform questionnaire.

The consultations and this paper are based on the premise that marginalization and unaddressed grievances by communities in the region provided a fertile ground for the ensuing violence and that any solution to the conflict and efforts toward stabilization and recovery must therefore take into account the conflict-affected communities' perspectives of the situation, their experiences and suggestions for the path forward towards peace and development.

Key Findings

Security is still one of the foremost concerns of communities across the four Lake Chad Basin countries.

There were unanimous calls for more and better equipped and trained troops and security forces. Equipment and training for vigilante groups were also requested, as many communities rely on them for their security, seeing them as complementary to armed forces and formal security actors.

Participants highlighted a number of grievances and perceived shortcomings with respect to security actors. This can be summarized as a general feeling that there is a lack of rule of law and professionalism amongst security agencies. This is fueled by alleged misconduct by and mistrust of security forces, as well as insufficient communication between them and communities.

In terms of livelihoods that would allow for early recovery, communities rely heavily on agricultural activities (farming, livestock and fishing) that require access to arable land, pastures and water. However, such access has been restricted due to various counter-insurgency operations and displacement management efforts, for example, restrictions on fishing in Lake Chad and on movement outside of villages in Nigeria for security reasons, and/or the set-up of IDP camps on arable lands in Cameroon and Niger.

Communities noted **an inherent tension between the continued need for security and the limitations thus imposed on agricultural activity, which hampers early recovery.** In addition, participants cited the negative effects on economic activity as a result of market and border closures, as well as of a lack of infrastructure (e.g. roads and bridges) and limited electricity provision. Finally, limited access to capital is a key challenge for communities in resuscitating the local economy.

Moreover, lacking economic opportunities, which became even more limited with border closure, are seen as a central reason for youth joining Boko Haram. In addition to a purely financial/economic incentive, voluntary recruitment is also seen to be driven by a general quest for a better life and by a vision of the future. Drug abuse was noted as an aggravating factor in recruitment, making youth more receptive to radical ideologies. Youth are also frustrated with the lack of political participation and what they perceive as manipulation by politicians.

As far as reintegration is concerned, **communities showed reluctance to the idea of welcoming Boko Haram fighters back,** based on a perception of reintegration as a reward rather than a punishment for the damage inflicted by the fighters on communities. Many feel that a condition for a reintegration process must be that victims and communities are the first ones to be adequately supported before former fighters are reintegrated.

⁶ Research was undertaken by the UNDP Country Offices of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria.

For reintegration to work, the need for screening and complete disarmament of former fighters by the government was stressed, combined with community involvement from the very beginning of the process. The return of IDPs adds additional pressure on communities, often resulting in conflict over housing and land.

A slightly different but equally important topic discussed was the **reintegration of vigilante groups**. Although they are still essential to community security in many parts of the region, these groups are looking towards the future and expect to be supported in any transition towards a post-insurgency context. Should they feel that no action is taken accordingly, some may become spoilers peacebuilding and local reconciliation.

Beyond reintegration, the **theme of reconciliation revealed deep wounds and trauma experienced by parties from all sides of the conflict in the Lake Chad Basin**. Many focus group participants highlighted the need for broad-based and robust psycho-social support as part of a longer process of healing, which may include a truth-telling process before reconciliation would be possible. It was stated that the indirect consequences of the conflict also needed to be addressed, such as a general increase in crime and intra-family violence. However, participants perceived the justice system as partial and not likely to be part of the solution in the short to medium term.

Local peace committees, by contrast, are seen as a resource for reconciliation and peacebuilding. **Religious and traditional leaders were named as the most trusted source of justice, notwithstanding the notable exclusion of women from these institutions. Indeed, the role of women in the Lake Chad Basin is paradoxical: frequently marginalized and excluded from decision-making and access to justice, they are perceived as playing an essential role in early warning, providing psycho-social support to victims and peacebuilding in general.** Women have also been affected differently than men by the widespread violence; there has been limited recourse for victims of sexual and gender-based violence and many widowed women become extremely vulnerable as sole breadwinners.

Other recurrent themes of the consultations include: the negative impact of climate change on farming and access to water; drug trafficking (with the complicity of security agencies) and the resulting drug epidemic; the lack of or unequal access to government services, including justice; and the role that education can play in both preventing and promoting radicalization. Finally, migration and displacement are seen as fueling competition for already limited resources, a perception that is amplified by the feeling that the international community mainly caters to IDPs and refugees, leaving host communities behind.

Background

The Boko Haram insurgency has entered its ninth year and continues to exact a tremendous toll on the people of the Lake Chad Basin. At its peak, the violence displaced around 2.7 million people across the region.⁷ The conflict further precipitated a devastating humanitarian crisis, ranked by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) as one of the four worst humanitarian crises globally in 2017. As of today, 2.3 million people remain displaced, with an estimated 10.7 million people in need across the affected areas of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, and 5.8 million food-insecure people at crisis and emergency levels. Violent incidents continue to occur, causing casualties among civilians, humanitarian workers and State armed forces, which, to date are mostly concentrated in Nigeria's Borno State and Cameroon's Far North.⁸

⁷ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2016). Lake Chad Basin, Crisis Overview as of 3 June 2016.

⁸ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2018). Lake Chad Basin, Crisis Overview as of 16 March 2018.

There have been broad efforts to mobilize support and seek solutions to the crisis. National governments, together with state and regional authorities, have made significant efforts to respond to the needs of the affected people. These efforts have also brought international support – financial, technical and political. In March 2017, the United Nations Security Council visited the Lake Chad Basin countries with the aim of receiving a first-hand understanding of the challenges on the ground. The visit resulted in United Nations Security Council Resolution 2349, providing an international framework for addressing the crisis and begin building sustainable peace and development for the region. Complementing this resolution have been various conferences and high-level events, such as Oslo (February 2017), Berlin (September 2017), N'Djamena (November 2017) and Abuja (February 2018). Notwithstanding the essential roles that national governments play, the conclusion remains that as a regional crisis, the Lake Chad Basin crisis demands a holistic and regional response.

In close partnership with the Governor of Borno State, Kashim Shettima, UNDP is facilitating the establishment of the Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum (the 'Forum') with support from the Governments of Germany, Sweden and Norway. The Forum constitutes a regional political mechanism that offers governors in the region a platform to engage in solutions to the Boko Haram crisis to jointly define a lasting, comprehensive solution with national, regional and international partners. In the lead-up to the first meeting of the Forum, UNDP held consultations across the Lake Chad Basin to better understand how communities affected by conflict and key stakeholders in the region perceive the crisis as well as what their proposed solutions are. The consultative process had the overarching goal of providing a voice to those on the front line of the crisis, who will need to own any sustainable solution to the crisis that restores peace and development in the region. It is hoped that this discussion paper will provide useful elements and inputs into the decision-making process for governors and policymakers.

Rationale

The Boko Haram insurgency emerged as a result of structural development deficits. An acute sense of grievance towards the government and lack of trust in the police and security apparatus are prominent among voluntary recruits.⁹ Identified root causes of the conflict include unequal access to basic services and justice, ineffective governance, low human security, lack of economic infrastructure and opportunity, as well as environmental degradation, all resulting in communities in the region feeling marginalized and aggrieved.¹⁰ Any solution to this conflict requires that communities play a lead role in transforming the conflict and collectively shape a different future for the Lake Chad Basin. To this effect, it is critical to understand the perspectives and perceptions of conflict-affected communities in the region in order to start discussions on a viable path towards peace and development.

Methodology

⁹ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2017). Journey to Extremism in Africa. Drivers, incentives and the tipping point for recruitment. www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/journey-to-extremism.html.

¹⁰ For a detailed analysis, see World Bank Group. 2016. North-East Nigeria Recovery and Peace Building Assessment: Synthesis Report. Washington, DC: World Bank. © World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/25791>.

Focus group discussions were held in 25 communities in Cameroon (five), Chad (six), Niger (four) and Nigeria (ten), undertaken by UNDP offices in each of the four countries. The communities were selected based on a high number of conflict-affected persons living in or around these areas, including large populations of IDPs. The geographical distribution of the communities consulted also reveals the logistical and security challenges that needed to be taken into consideration. Due to the sensitive nature of some of the focus group discussions, some communities, in particular in northern Borno, could not be included in the exercise.

At the community level, UNDP leveraged its networks (having in many cases previously set up similar consultations structures). This enabled a break down the population into four different sub-groups (with the exception of Cameroon where a fifth group of village chiefs and religious leaders was also created): men, women, young men and young women. The distinction by gender was justified by the different types of challenges that the Lake Chad Basin crisis presents for men and women, and by the different roles and positions that they have in the respective contexts. Additionally, the consultation process aimed to tap into how the younger generation – frequently cited as part of the problem – view the situation and can be engaged to help transform it.

In addition to the community-level consultations, key stakeholders were engaged in Diffa, Niger and in Maiduguri, Nigeria.¹¹ These consultations contributed by adding additional perspectives from different key interest groups, such as civil society organizations (CSOs), traditional rulers and religious leaders, and women’s groups, among others.

A common methodological approach guided all the consultations, which helped structure them uniformly across the Lake Chad Basin, thus making it easier for reporting and making comparisons between the different countries. The facilitator asked participants to discuss a set of questions on the rule of law, local governance and basic service provision, livelihoods, radicalization, security, reintegration; and reconciliation. They were encouraged to discuss challenges as well as possible solutions of how they can be addressed. The rapporteur then reported these discussions in a reporting framework. The reports and notes from the various consultations form the basis for findings and recommendations put forward in this discussion paper.

With four focus group discussions held in 27 communities, as well as the additional eight held in Niger and Nigeria, the findings presented in this paper come from over 100 focus group discussions held across the Lake Chad Basin during March and April 2018. The community-level focus group discussions involved between 8 and 15 participants. Taken together with the stakeholder discussions in Diffa and Maiduguri, over 1,100 people were consulted as part of this process, with the demographic breakdown shown in Figure 1 and geographic distribution shown in Figure 2.

Figure 1. Age and gender distribution

¹¹ In Niger, traditional rulers, members of the Peace Committee and CSOs were engaged in three separate discussions; in Nigeria, by contrast, traditional rulers and religious leaders, women’s groups, CSOs, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and the Civilian Joint Task Force were engaged in five additional focus group discussions.

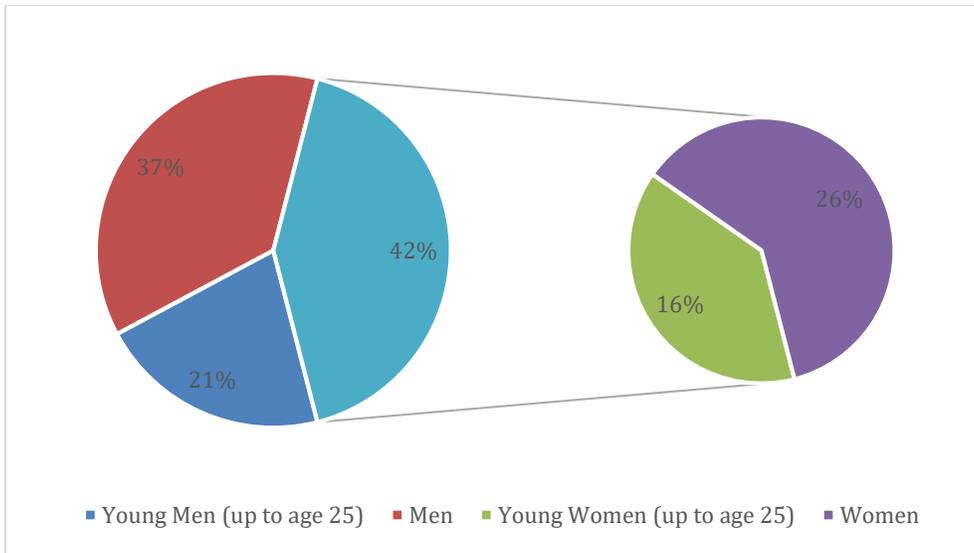
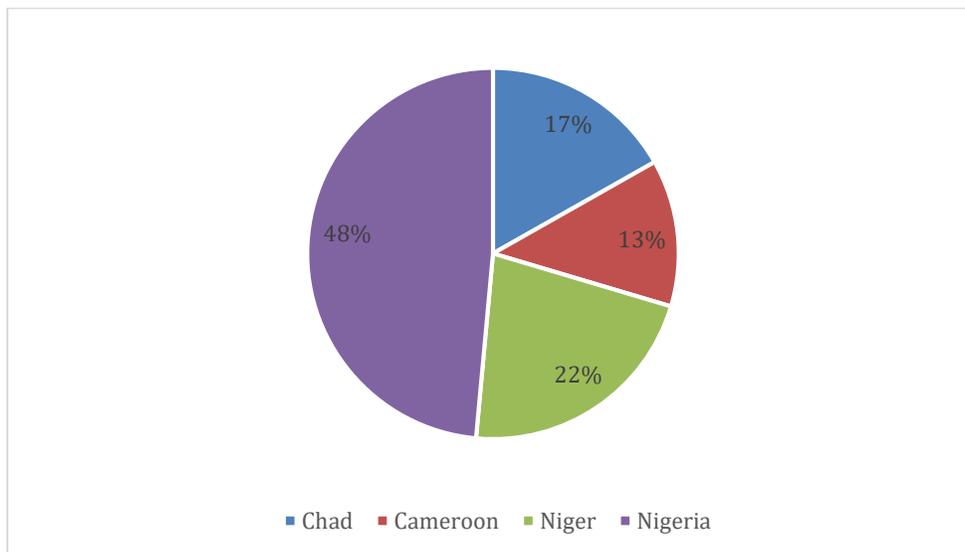


Figure 2. Geographic distribution



This consultation, extensive both in breadth and depth, aims to provide an important glimpse of how some communities are coping with the ramifications of the Boko Haram insurgency and its attendant consequences.

Limitations

The extensive nature of the consultation process entailed challenges that should be highlighted. The consultations were undertaken by different teams in the different countries, in different languages (English, French, Hausa, Kanuri) and by different facilitators. Also, the teams that undertook the consultations varied both in composition (some by national staff, others by international staff), and experience. These factors invariably affect the resulting discussions and the uniformity of the data gathered throughout this process.

It should also be noted that a consultative process such as this one aims to highlight the perceptions and understandings of various dynamics at the community level; some of these perceptions may be the result of misinformation or misunderstanding. However, these perceptions need to be considered since they reveal how the conflict is perceived and understood at the community level, as well as the proposed solutions.

Main Findings

Regional Stabilization

The focus group discussions across the Lake Chad Basin revealed a number of opportunities as well as challenges for regional stabilization. The discussions pointed to a cyclical sequence of events that presents the main challenge for any stabilization effort. Continued insecurity across the region warrants ongoing – and in some places possibly even a scaling up of – counter-insurgency efforts. However, the restrictions, bans and limitations in place in the various countries as part of these counter-insurgency efforts are severely impeding the region's economic activities and, by extension, the region's ability to progress to an early recovery stage and restore food production. In this context, it is noteworthy that much of the region's economic activity relies on access to natural resources (e.g. land, pastures, water and firewood) for agriculture, fishing and pastoralism. In North-East Nigeria for example, it is estimated that 40 per cent of households rely on farming as their main source of income.¹² Access to land and water resources has been especially affected and limited through various counter-insurgency operations and displacement management efforts. In Kolofata, Cameroon, residents reported that IDP camps had been set up on agricultural lands, reducing the ability for nearby communities to cultivate this land to support the increased population. In Guitte, Chad, restrictions on where and when fishing can take place severely impact the amount of fish that can be caught. In Niger, communities noted that the ban on urea – a chemical commonly used in fertilizer but also often banned due to its possible use in explosive devices – has reportedly resulted in a drastic reduction in crop yield. In Nigeria, there were restrictions on movement outside villages and communities, which restricts the amount of land that can be cultivated for farming, thereby capping both food production and the prospects of livelihoods for many. Taken together, these measures provide common limitations at the regional level for communities to increase food security, generate livelihoods, and begin the early recovery phase. In these limitations, youth emerge as particularly affected to the point where they become a driver of the conflict. Faced with limited options of making a living and pervasive food insecurity at the community level, which are further

¹² United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2017). Livelihoods and Economic Recovery Assessment.

exacerbated due to security measures in place, together with their aspirations and visions for a better life, uneducated youth reportedly turn to Boko Haram, both to elevate their social status and for financial gain. This fuels the conflict and creates the cyclical relationship illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Dilemma for Stabilization in the Lake Chad Basin

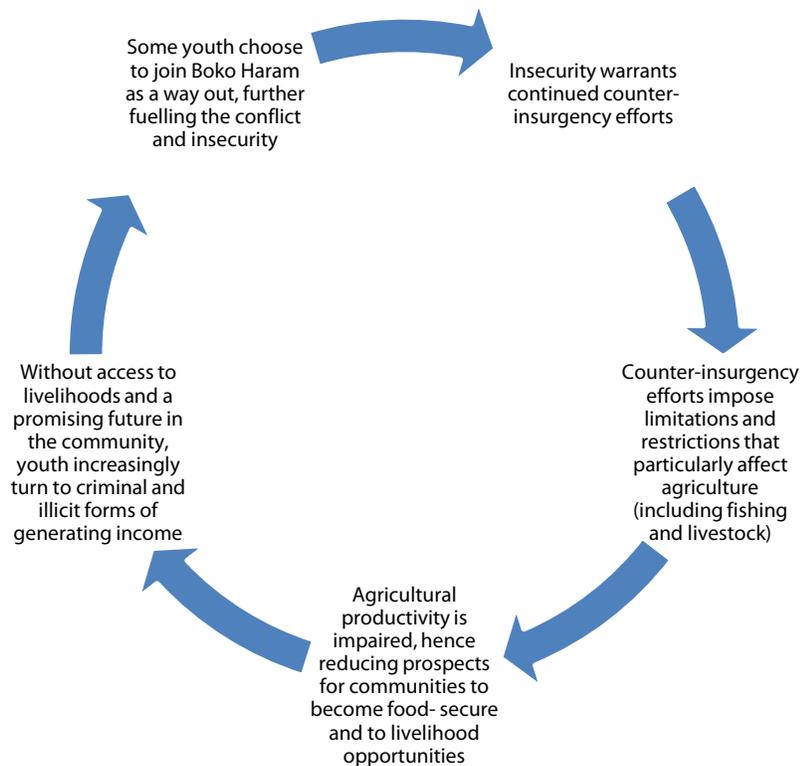


Figure 3 highlights a key dilemma that stabilization efforts need to tackle in the region in order to begin to transition from a humanitarian and conflict-affected environment, to one where early recovery efforts can begin to impact the lives of millions. Although it is simplified and does not take into account a range of other root causes and drivers of the conflict, it illustrates one of the central and recurring tensions that represents a challenge for stabilization efforts.

Stabilization – The Security Dimension

Notwithstanding this cyclical dilemma, there were consistently calls for increased security for the entire region. The insecurity at the community level resulted in calls for deploying more troops and security forces, especially in the island areas of Lake Chad and the Godali mountains perceived to be a Boko Haram stronghold. In many communities in Cameroon and Niger, the perception is that border communities on the Nigerian side have a prevalent Boko Haram presence; whether true or not, this perception and high levels of suspicion could inhibit efforts in revitalizing cross-border trade. Unanimous across the Lake Chad Basin is also the reliance upon community vigilante groups as a central actor in the community security architecture. Most of the communities noted that these groups were not sufficiently supported, and called for more equipment, support and training for them to complement formal security agencies.

Although an increase in formal military presence is deemed important, many communities also highlighted perceived shortcomings of the security forces. A lack of professionalism of the security forces and their alleged misconduct was cited on several occasions, reportedly resulting in insufficient trust between the security forces and communities. On numerous occasions it was noted that patrols by security agencies were only carried out during the daytime (leading to Boko Haram attacking at night) or that previous knowledge or predictable patterns of patrols enabled insurgents to plan around these patrols. In Cameroon, it was observed that relations between the security agencies and communities were particularly strained by sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by members of the security forces. A focus group in Limani, for example, pointed out that a woman gave birth to a child who was fathered by a soldier, resulting in her being excluded from her home due to the taboos associated with this incident. Other girls and young women in the area left villages with soldiers without undertaking the traditional or civil marriage procedures. Taken together with other interactions with security forces, such as at checkpoints and borders where focus group participants noted frequently being harassed or extorted to paying arbitrary fees for grant of passage, these experiences aggravate community sentiments against security agencies. This fuels the divisions and mistrust between communities and security agencies, particularly among youth. In Niger, this has resulted in tensions between youth and security services, and some communities perceive themselves as being caught in between state security services and Boko Haram. In Chad, residents felt that the breakdown of trust between communities and security agencies had led to the latter not taking seriously credible information on the whereabouts of Boko Haram insurgents.

The stresses of the conflict and breakdown of law and order was reported to have led to an increase in domestic violence and abuse in some communities, particularly Ngwom in Nigeria. Simple infrastructural investments, such as using solar-powered solutions to provide electricity and light to rural communities, were also highlighted as important in aiding in the community security efforts.

The consultations clearly show that there is a need to continue to invest in security and trust building between communities and security agencies. This should not only include an increased and more effective presence of military and other security agencies, but also a community-based approach to security and policing, including trust-building measures between communities and armed forces.

Recommendations

- Sustain well-trained and equipped military and security presence that adheres to a code of conduct, and expand the geographical coverage to rural communities.

- Improve government oversight and accountability of counter-insurgency operations across the Lake Chad Basin for enhanced effectiveness.
- Set up community-level platforms for members of the community to liaise and interact with counter-insurgency operations as a means to bring counter-insurgency operations and communities closer together in the fight against Boko Haram.
- Build capacities and increase salaries of security officials (police, gendarmes, border guards) in order to prevent corrupt practices at border crossings that hamper trade.
- Post and publicly display applicable taxes for goods at the border crossings to avoid arbitrary fees and taxes. Additionally, there should be clarity on the documentation needed in order to avoid harassment when crossing over the border. Consider setting up a hotline or anonymous tip mechanism where people can raise suspected customs and police scams for further investigation and review by internal review systems.
- Review bans, limitations and restrictions in place for the free movement of people and goods in the region. Should these bans, limitations and restrictions be warranted, they must not negatively affect the economy and must not lead to a reduction in food production and livelihoods. This review could also enhance the oversight of checkpoints to determine which ones are official and which ones may have been set up arbitrarily.

Stabilization – Early Recovery Dimension

There are a multitude of early recovery efforts in place across the region to help support conflict-affected communities. Many support agricultural production, including support to fisheries and livestock value chains, as a main source of livelihoods across the region. As mentioned, this main source of livelihoods is being challenged by a multitude of restrictions, bans and other impediments that make it harder for communities to sustain themselves with agriculture, livestock and fishing. Closure of waterways with neighbouring countries and a ban on crossing Lake Chad were cited as challenges to the fishing industry in Chad, which, together with a reported five-fold increase on fishing tax, renders this trade an increasingly unviable solution for sustainable livelihood. In light of these challenges, communities around Lake Chad are increasingly looking to transform the shrinking waters of the Lake into an opportunity.

Many communities, particularly in Niger and Chad, pointed to the opportunity for irrigated farming around areas recently uncovered by the receding lake waters. Irrigation systems have already proven effective in this area, giving rise to market gardens, which provide both food and income for small-scale farmers. Efforts should be made to identify innovative irrigation solutions to maximize the potential for these areas to improve the economies of communities living around Lake Chad, especially around the Komadougou shoreline, which is believed to hold significant agricultural potential. In light of the receding lake waters and diminishing sources of income and food, these efforts could prevent communities from slipping further towards food insecurity. Such efforts, however, need to be made in a holistic manner, taking into account the needs and use of water resources of the fishing and livestock industries in order to ensure that innovative irrigation solutions become a win-win for all local industries, thereby amplifying the economic impact. Nevertheless, many of the investments require the commitment of government and partners to provide education, build infrastructure, and leverage access to new technologies and innovation, to fully harness these opportunities.

Communities across Cameroon and Niger reiterated that IDPs and refugees had settled in areas previously devoted to agriculture. This was especially a challenge in Kolofata and Moskota in Cameroon, where shortage of food continues to drive up the cost of basic goods. There is a need to closely review where formal settlements are

positioned to ensure that they do not make access to food and income for host communities even more difficult. These host communities felt strongly that IDPs should be relocated or return to their communities of origin, creating tension between the two groups.

To enhance food security for the entire region, there is a far-reaching need to support the development of arable land for subsistence farming that can provide a source of livelihoods for people and improve the availability of food. The restrictions on land usage mentioned above limit the extent to which food can be produced and to what extent it generates an economic dividend. The closure of markets, commercial centres and borders further limits the options for trade and employment. Previously, young people from Cameroon would cross the border to work in Nigeria, but this has become too difficult since the conflict, rendering many Cameroonian youth unemployed. Similarly, restricted movement and trade with Nigeria was highlighted as a major challenge affecting trade in Mahada, Chad. Trade becomes especially challenged during the rainy season due to the poor infrastructure available. Significant investments need to target roads and bridges to maintain trade connections and boost economic exchange with surrounding communities. Access to electricity and effective drainage and irrigation systems are also important early recovery areas that could have significant impact at the community level. Residents in Nigeria pointed out that poor drainage frequently results in stagnant pools of water during the rainy season, which leads to a spread of diseases such as cholera. This highlights the compounding impact that certain challenges in the communities present.

Communities across the region reported that youth join Boko Haram due to a lack of opportunity and poverty. The prospects of monetary gain in joining this group are perceived to have been an important factor in recruitment, as well as the opportunity to gain recognition and acceptance. Restoring the ability of youth to sustain themselves and provide them with hope for the future, together with investments in education and value orientation initiatives to promote peace, would go a long way in preventing their recruitment into armed groups or their engagement in illicit activities. In one focus group discussion, the rationale for joining an armed group was explained by the fact that dowries were too expensive. The lure of Boko Haram facilitating marriages at cheaper prices is therefore also an appealing rationale for some male youth in joining the group. This example illustrates the notion that the younger generation does not seem to be asking for anything exceptional – they only wish to have the means to pursue a fulfilling life.

Providing viable economic and livelihood alternatives and opportunities in particular for youth, emerges as central to any stabilization and recovery effort. This could take the form of vocational training, skills acquisition programmes and job creation initiatives. Many communities also noted that access to microfinancing, especially for women and youth, could go far in providing relief for these groups, and by extension communities at large. Lacking access to capital is a key challenge for communities in resuscitating the local economy. For example, restoring markets, shops and warehouses destroyed by the conflict entails a significant up-front investment that many do not have. Microfinancing and access to interest-free loans could have significant impact in helping jump-start businesses across the region. In some areas, the Village Savings and Loan Association was highlighted as an initiative that should be strengthened and further resourced so that communities have a basic social safety net. Investments such as these should also be combined with creating support services to boost economic activities, such as agricultural posts and veterinary centres, and restoring access to seeds and fertilizers for agricultural input. Livestock markets, being a major source of income for many, are also particularly important in helping the local economy gain some momentum.

Recommendations

- Invest significantly in basic education, skills acquisition, vocational training and job creation across communities in the Lake Chad Basin. These should specifically target youth, women, victims of conflict and vigilante groups, and should be tailored to market needs.
- Invest in infrastructure, particularly road networks, electricity, drainage and irrigation systems, which all have wide-ranging economic impacts.
- Roll out support packages to cater for widows and orphans of the conflict. Some figures put the number of orphans in Borno at 50,000, and without proper support, these individuals will be future recruits of Boko Haram.

Reintegration

Reintegration was a topic specifically targeted in the focus group discussions to obtain a better understanding of community sentiments and perceptions of this process. In general, communities across the Lake Chad Basin showed reluctance to the idea of welcoming Boko Haram fighters back, especially without a proper accountability and justice process. This resentment is stronger among youth than elders, but communities are generally in agreement. There is a sense of betrayal by these fighters because of what they have done to their own communities and a widespread fear for what their presence in the community could mean. There are also concerns that reintegration of former Boko Haram members would 'reward' their behavior while victims of conflict and conflict-affected communities have yet to be fully supported and compensated for their ordeals. Reintegration as a concept was frequently intertwined with the notion of reconciliation and forgiveness, potentially making this process a more sensitive issue at the community level. Although reluctance to reintegration is prevalent throughout the region, it is much more apparent and overt in communities closer to the epicentre of the conflict, especially in Nigeria and Cameroon.

Part of what is driving opposition against reintegration seems to be economic realities and a lack of perceived fairness or justice at the community level. The economic realities of many of the communities across the Lake Chad Basin is that there are very limited opportunities for making a living. With a lack of income-generating activities, the question many communities ask themselves is how reintegrated former combatants make a living in this context. Unemployment and food insecurity are two very real challenges that the region contends with, and the notion of bringing former fighters back into communities presents added competition for both livelihoods and food. In this context, reintegration of former fighters is, in many communities, particularly in Nigeria, perceived as unjust, given that efforts are targeted towards former Boko Haram members while victims of the conflict and conflict-affected communities are still suffering.

Despite this reluctance, some community members highlighted elements of what a successful reintegration process could look like. They noted that any reintegration process must begin with true repentance and the taking of an oath. Security agencies would first be tasked with screening prospective individuals for integration, but the oath would be administered by traditional rulers. In Sangere, Girei Local Government Area in Adamawa State, male focus group discussants proposed a public statement from individuals informing the public of why they had joined Boko Haram as part of a learning process for the government and community, and allowing a better understanding of how to better prevent such conflicts in the future. Moreover, reintegration could also be phased. In some communities in Cameroon, there is a wider acceptance of reintegrating women, children and ex-hostages who have been associated with Boko Haram. The reintegration of these vulnerable and often traumatized groups into the communities should be subject to the military, administrative and traditional authorities, but some

communities (particularly in Cameroon) are prepared to accept them back, presenting a possible first step in a bigger reintegration process. The general sentiment, however, was that former fighters may need to be housed in a special detention centre while conditions within communities gradually become more conducive to their reintegration.

These community-level initiatives notwithstanding, the focus group discussions revealed a consensus around the need for government involvement and leadership in these processes. The screening and vetting of former fighters as well as ensuring their complete disarmament was repeatedly stressed as a prerequisite for any feasible process. There is also an interest from the community to be involved in designing reintegration initiatives. Stakeholders in Nigeria, for example, felt that reintegration efforts, particularly the Operation Safe Corridor¹³ initiative, was a process with limited public input, and that communities have only been engaged more recently. As a result, this initiative is perceived by some as faulty and less credible at the grassroots level, many feeling that it was empowering insurgents through training and rehabilitation while victims of conflict continue to be left abandoned, which builds up new grievances. A conflict-sensitive approach is necessary for a successful reintegration process. In this light, government efforts to address the needs and concerns of communities is essential to successful reintegration.

Community vigilante groups are a critical stakeholder in the reintegration process, but not always perceived as needing reintegration at the community level. Across the Lake Chad Basin, there were many calls for increased support in terms of training, equipment and finances to these groups. They are, in many cases, perceived as the most effective, and at times the only, protection that communities have against Boko Haram. For example, in Cameroon, participants felt that it was because of local vigilante groups that they had been able to return to their communities. However, since these groups are critical to the counter-insurgency operations, there are also reports of them feeling increasingly frustrated by the lack of support from the government for their efforts and sacrifices. This is particularly noteworthy with the Civilian Joint Task Force in Nigeria. Although their role continues to be important, as stated by focus group discussants across the region, some members of these vigilante groups are increasingly looking ahead towards life after supporting the armed engagement against Boko Haram. This presents an opportunity, but also risks. There are expectations that these groups will be compensated in some way by the government, given their commitment and sacrifice in counter-insurgency operations. If they perceive that such compensation is not forthcoming, then some might decide to oppose stabilization and peacebuilding efforts: upcoming elections in both Cameroon and Nigeria may present such opportunities. The International NGOs (INGO Group) in Maiduguri recommended that clear guidance be given on what will become of the Civilian Joint Task Force, which must be a part of any holistic and sustainable approach for peace in the region. Increased vocational training, skills acquisition initiatives and integration efforts with formalized security structures should be explored for members of vigilante groups. In Cameroon, it was suggested to reintegrate these groups into the municipal police force being set up in Mora, Mozogo, Kolofata and Fotokol. An additional dilemma that needs to be considered in reintegration of vigilante groups is the sustained demand for their role in the security architecture. In this regard, a full disarmament and demobilization process would be impossible without jeopardizing community security. A balance would therefore need to be struck between providing concrete assurances that these groups have a future in a post-insurgency setting while allowing them to continue to play the crucial role they are reportedly playing in communities across the Lake Chad Basin.

On the whole, a significant amount of work is needed to make reintegration successful. Any efforts to move a reintegration process of former Boko Haram fighters forward would need to closely engage state security agencies

¹³ Operation Safe Corridor is an initiative by the Nigerian Federal Government that aims at de-radicalizing, and reintegrating surrendered Boko Haram fighters.

as well as communities from the onset. A precarious balance would need to be struck between catering to former fighters (Boko Haram and others) and catering to other groups in the community, such as victims of conflict and people who have not taken up arms. Reintegration will only be sustainable if local economies are restored and have the absorptive capacities to provide livelihoods for both host communities and returnees, and if communities are ready to accept former fighters back. In the absence of a conflict-sensitive and community-driven approach, including appropriate mechanisms for reconciliation and justice, the risk of revenge killings and further violence is high, as stated by several participants.

Recommendations

- Begin sensitization campaigns at the community level for reintegration and dialogue, and allow communities to lead the reintegration process at the grassroots level following proper screening by the relevant security authorities.
- Harmonize measures for reintegration of former fighters and support to other vulnerable groups (victims of violence, returnees, IDPs, refugees) to ensure a conflict-sensitive approach to reintegration.
- Invest in measures that can boost rural economic growth in order to provide an enabling environment for a reintegration process.
- Create temporary centres for housing individuals to be reintegrated until community-preparedness is adequate.

Reconciliation and Justice

The deep wounds and trauma experienced by parties from all sides of the conflict in the Lake Chad Basin demand support for a thorough and comprehensive healing process. As part of the discussions on reintegration, many focus group participants highlighted that there is a need to support a broad-based and long process of healing. There are clear 'perpetrator-victim' sentiments in the region, and any healing process needs to be inclusive and participatory to have the desired impact. The INGO stakeholder group in Maiduguri specifically pointed to the necessity of finding a mechanism that is accepted by victims and communities, and that holds all parties to the conflict accountable.

Reconciliation and justice would not only need to deal with the direct consequences of Boko Haram, but also the indirect effects that this conflict has had. In Cameroon, for example, communities reported that the Boko Haram crisis has resulted in a settlement of accounts and scores between families, ethnic groups and villages that may have been at odds prior to the insurgency. Across the entire region, the conflict has precipitated an increase in crime, intra-family violence and the rupture of social ties. Hence, this conflict has resulted in a general breakdown of rule of law and established societal norms, and opportunists have exploited this breakdown to settle other grievances or for financial or other gain. This puts significant pressure on already overstretched and weak judicial institutions.

Although the justice systems differ between the countries, there was consensus that they lack fairness and credibility; there is a perception that the application of laws is arbitrary and a general that there is a pervasive lack of accountability. Court systems are perceived to tend to favour the rich at the expense of the poor, and court proceedings to frequently drag on for long periods of time, becoming highly expensive. In Bol/Matafo, in Chad, this issue was raised as a major concern. The level of confidence in the judiciary across the region is low due to corrupt practices and the sense that justice can be bought. Residents in Mora, Cameroon, highlighted the need

for training of judicial and law enforcement staff on anti-corruption and respect for human rights as a means to address these challenges and enable these institutions to more effectively serve their communities.¹⁴ Nevertheless, with respect to a search for justice and reconciliation in the aftermath of the Boko Haram crisis, these institutions may not be best placed to effectively help bring peace and stability in the short to medium term.

The role of traditional institutions remains fundamental. The gradual erosion of the traditional institutions was cited as a key underlying factor resulting in the multitude of conflicts across the region. The transfer of powers from traditional authorities to constitutionally mandated authorities has eroded the conflict prevention capacities that have historically existed at the community level. As a result, there is a decreased ability of communities to manage conflict peacefully. Nevertheless, traditional institutions continue to be seen as close to the people, having significant social and cultural influence at the community level. Indeed, traditional rulers and religious leaders confirmed this. However, women community members stated that they were often excluded from these institutions and their deliberations. Also, there appears to be a generational shift occurring where youth are increasingly influenced by other sources than traditional and religious leaders, such as pop culture, which infuses a different set of norms and values into society. The influence of traditional rulers and religious leaders over youth is therefore limited in some communities, and in some circumstances, such as Toumour Village in Niger, the perceived lack of justice from traditional rulers and chiefs has reportedly led to increased banditry and crime as various groups exploit the complete breakdown of rule of law.

Despite these limitations, many communities called for the empowerment of traditional rulers and chiefs to help resolve community-level disputes and tensions. They remain the most trusted source of justice and their proximity to the community renders them more readily available than formal judicial processes. Empowerment could take the form of capacity building of traditional rulers and religious leaders in engaging in alternative dispute resolution and dialogue to support these stakeholders. However, it could also imply legally and formally expanding their roles to bolster their abilities in upholding justice and accountability at the local level. In Cameroon, for example, communities called for conflict-sensitive appointments of customary court presidents and assessors to provide the resources and capacity for customary courts to function properly and provide justice in conflict-affected communities. However they may be empowered, it is important to ensure an increased inclusion of youth and women in these processes, since these groups frequently perceive traditional rulers and religious leaders as biased against them.

To support the longer-term peacebuilding agenda, many communities called for the creation or enhancement of local peace committees or local conflict management committees. In Chad and some parts of Nigeria, communities advocated for strengthening such structures already in place. In other areas, the setting up of these structures could be an important step in helping drive the reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts with support from trained community leaders and elders. Interestingly, many of the focus group discussions revealed the lack of recreation centres as a challenge to promoting community cohesion. In Chad, this was raised as a specific way to constructively engage idle youth who otherwise are exposed to the risk of radicalization. Recreation centres could help build community relations and promote a sense of social cohesion among younger generations, preventing radicalization. These centres could in turn be leveraged for increased participation by youth in decision-making processes to ensure that they are part of shaping the solutions and the future of their communities.

¹⁴ The effective functioning of these structures becomes particularly important given the complex need to manage conflict, especially related to lands recently made available by the shrinking Lake Chad.

There are also other dynamics in the communities that emerged as centrally important to any reconciliation process. Family ties were frequently cited in Chadian and Nigerian communities as a central to any dialogue and reconciliation process. In Niger, collective prayer was frequently mentioned as a means to come together in a time of adversity and find collective strength. Effectively leveraging these social and cultural dimensions will be important for any sustainable reconciliation and healing process in these communities.

Focus group participants advocated for a comprehensive truth-telling process that would help establish a common narrative and understanding of the Boko Haram crisis. This would allow communities to begin the healing process by understanding the perspectives from perpetrators and victims. However, it would also necessarily need to include governments, who are an integral part in the conflict. Such a process would need to shed light on those currently imprisoned or detained who are believed by communities to be innocent as well as to seek closure for community members whose whereabouts are unknown. The quest for truth would also involve potentially uncomfortable discussions on those accidentally or wrongfully killed by security forces.

Although there is a general acceptance that, at some point, dialogue will need to resolve the conflict and help bring peace, many communities are not yet ready to forgive and begin anew. Resentment and mistrust run deep due to the atrocities committed, and many community members do not feel ready for a reconciliation process. To prepare communities for this difficult process, increasing the capacity of existing social support networks (in particular women's networks) as well as investing in infrastructure that brings communities together (such as recreational centres) would be necessary.

Recommendations

- Support traditional rulers and religious leaders in dialogue, coexistence and reconciliation. This support could also entail legally empowering them through broader mandates to adjudicate and enforce decisions.
- Invest in and train a network of women mediators, enabling them to prevent and resolve conflict and radicalization in their communities.
- Establish and strengthen local peace committees, with the participation of women and youth, and recreation centres to help foster community cohesion and leverage capacities for conflict prevention and resolution.

Other Key Findings

Women

The role of women in the region demonstrated an all too common paradox – women are frequently marginalized from decision-making and are often discriminated against in dispute resolution processes at the community level, yet they are also seen as instrumental in the peacebuilding process. With respect to families, it is often women who bear the main responsibility for child care and for providing education of their children. In particular widows and single mothers bear the double burden of work and child care, which becomes particularly challenging in a context of perceived limited support and exposure for such groups. It was mentioned in the consultations that

schools and male role models are needed to complement the efforts of mothers in children's education and help restore values that are seen as being gradually eroding.

Moreover, many communities noted that women already play central roles in providing psycho-social support to victims of trauma and suffering. In this regard, they should be capacitated in the areas of psychosocial support to provide such support in a clinically informed way to help individuals and groups effectively deal with trauma.

Women across the region have already come together in various associations and networks to provide each other with financial support since there are limited microfinancing opportunities. These grassroots initiatives and networks are important mechanisms to tap into for solutions that specifically empower women both economically but also in the peacebuilding process.

Participants across the region also agreed that women have greatly suffered and continue to suffer as a result of the Boko Haram crisis. Violence against women is widespread, with limited recourse and accountability for victims. Widows who become the sole breadwinners for their family are often especially vulnerable and frequently forced to resort to prostitution or joining an armed group to make a living. In a discussion with women's groups in Maiduguri, it was noted that the absence of mothers from the home will have longer-term implications for the value system in the region, because children grow up without the proper moral guidance. Consultations pointed to an urgent need to provide significant and wide-scale support for women in general, and widows in particular,

In some focus groups, there was a clear difference between male and female participants. The latter were frequently more positive, engaged and excited about being involved in the process. In some cases, this was apparently due to their general exclusion from many forms of consultations at the community level, and hence they seized this opportunity to be heard. Women were also reportedly more interested in collective benefit and collective solutions than many of the men. Male participants more frequently needed to understand their individual role in any solution and see the possible individual rewards. This also included older men and was not restricted to younger males. It was also noteworthy that many communities felt that an investment in and empowerment of women would have indirect benefits on future generations through a cascading effect on their children.

Recommendations

- Target programmes for women to build their capacities in dialogue, peacebuilding, and psychosocial support.
- Increase social protection for women, particularly focusing on preventing sexual and gender-based violence.
- Create platforms and avenues for women's participation in decision-making.
- Scale up support packages for widows and provide means for business start-up packages and access to capital to promote women's entrepreneurship.

Youth

The role of youth emerged in all conversations across the region, particularly since they had been specifically sought out as participants in the focus group discussions and due to their integral role in helping shape the future

for the Lake Chad Basin. Of the voluntary Boko Haram recruits, a large majority are under 30 years of age. Young women are much more numerous among the forced recruits than among the voluntary recruits.¹⁵ The perception among both older and younger groups in the communities is that the young people who join voluntarily do so because of the illusion of freedom and because of their exuberance. There is both a monetary or financial incentive, but recruitment is equally driven by the quest for a better life and a vision of the future. Some youth resort to drug use, further deteriorating the social fabric of communities. Drug use among youth was also identified as further exacerbating the vulnerability of this segment of the population and their likelihood in accepting radical ideologies.

The sense of hopelessness and despair that many youth feel is partly due to being left outside of decision-making processes and of various efforts to advance development at the community level. When youth are left behind, they seek alternatives and strive for a better life; joining an armed group is often the most readily available option. To provide youth with alternative options and viable solutions for income-generation, significant investments in basic education, vocational training, skills acquisition and job creation are needed at the community level. Without these available options, youth resort to illicit means for earning a living.

Crime and delinquency, however, are not only a function of desperation, but also a manifestation of frustration with the political elite. Some young men stated during the consultations that their violation of laws and general delinquency was a means to rebel against politicians and the elite. The feeling that these young men had was that politicians make many promises during campaigns and count on people during election season, but then do nothing for them when elected. This is illustrative of the perception of political power being removed from communities, in particular youth, and is an issue that will need to be addressed for more responsive and democratic governance in the longer term.

An interesting feature of the focus group discussions with youth was that they frequently had a different timeline than elders in the community. Elders, with a robust knowledge of history, seemed to make decisions and inputs based on a longer-term perspective, and their concerns tended to be more in line with seismic and longer-term impacts on the community. Youth, on the other hand, were generally more focused on the shorter term, making them more vulnerable to immediate gratification that recruitment into armed groups offer. In Mafoni, Maiduguri Municipal Council in Borno State, for example, elders highlighted the issues with the drainage systems as central in the community's collective capacity to manage flooding, whereas youth's immediate priority was to access jobs. Although their employment and access to income would have broad collective impacts for the entire community, due to the extreme struggles that many youth across the region face, they are more focused on addressing their own immediate needs than focusing on longer-term perspectives. This generational difference needs to be taken into account in structuring any youth-sensitive response, with specific elements to harness the substantial peacebuilding impact that youth possess.

There was some hesitation among elder men to involve and include youth in the same consultative platform as elders. There was a fear that the elders would lose influence over key community decisions and that they may have a diminished role in the community. This is a major issue that will need to be addressed, which touches upon the cultural paradigm shifts mentioned earlier. These changes need to be carefully considered to ensure that all stakeholders are engaged and jointly contribute to a collective vision for the future.

¹⁵ See also United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2017). Journey to Extremism in Africa. Drivers, incentives and the tipping point for recruitment. www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/journey-to-extremism.html: 26-27.

Recommendations

- Invest in recreational centres and programmes to engage idle and restless youth. It is important that such programmes cater to their needs, including access to food. It is important that youth feel they have a role in an inclusive and shared vision for the future.
- Target youth, particularly those affected by conflict and violence, for rehabilitative services, and develop business support packages to promote young entrepreneurship.
- Create wide-ranging psycho-social support systems for the tens of thousands of orphans of the conflict whose future productive capacities depend on access to qualified and available support services.

The Environment

In Bumsa, Gulani Local Government in Yobe State, participants claimed that farming was increasingly being abandoned due to erratic rainfall, drought and soil degradation. Farming, once a staple of the community, is gradually seen as an unreliable livelihood, resulting in more unemployed people and decreasing food production. Similar sentiments were expressed both from fishing communities with respect to the fishing industry, as well as communities involved in livestock rearing. The resultant impact is greater multi-dimensional poverty and vulnerability of these communities.

Access to water for drinking, hygiene and agricultural practices were discussed, particularly in areas where large numbers of IDPs have settled. This concerns both the amount and quality of the water available. It is seen by these communities as integral in avoiding humanitarian crisis and in terms of supporting the early recovery and livelihoods generation by enabling irrigation systems for farming. There were also reports of electricity cuts, causing electrical water pumps to stop working, thus interrupting access to water supply.

Recommendations

- Involve communities in the sustainable management of natural resources, to prevent conflict around competition for resources.

Drug Abuse

The challenge of drug abuse featured prominently in many discussions, particularly in Nigeria and Chad. In Chad, there is a sense of hopelessness around the drug epidemic, including the perceived impunity for traffickers, as communities blame security agencies for being complicit in the trafficking. The perception is that communities can raise awareness and specifically target youth with drug awareness initiatives, but such efforts are undermined by corrupt members within security agencies who work with traffickers for financial gain. In Nigeria, drug abuse was cited as frequently leading to broken homes and fuelling the erosion of value systems. Nevertheless, drugs are a last resort that young men and women in particular turn to in desperation and frustration over the lack of opportunities available to them.

Communities across the region called for stronger enforcement and campaigns to counter drug abuse. Even though traditional rulers and religious leaders in some cases have limited traction with the younger generation, many communities still felt that working through these stakeholders would be key to help uphold the social and cultural norms that are eroded through widespread drug abuse.

Recommendations

- Invest in youth recreational centres to provide spaces for youth engagement and interaction in the community.
- Leverage innovative avenues (social media, pop culture, etc.) for awareness-raising campaigns on drug abuse.

Governance

Good governance surfaced as a solution to many of the region's problems, but the gap between citizens and government in many parts of the region has resulted in a reduction in people's trust in the government. There were calls for decentralization of public services to make them more available to rural communities, the need to strengthen and capacitate government agents to become more independent and impartial (particularly judicial systems), as well as more robust oversight and accountability mechanisms to ensure that services are effectively provided to those who need them. Leadership integrity and civic participation were also highlighted as essential elements for stabilizing the Lake Chad Basin. The lack of participation in governance across the whole region was seen as a challenge, in particular for women whose role in decision-making is seen both by men and women as limited.

Governance also needs to be strengthened and expanded. In Niger, many participants noted that NGOs and CSOs have stepped in to support and supplement the provision of services that local governments were unable to provide, reducing public trust in the government. In Matafo and Bol, Chad, residents noted that the island areas remained almost with no government presence, and limited educational institutions for residents left these areas fairly isolated and vulnerable to recruitment into Boko Haram.

There is a need to re-establish and rebuild public services to make them more functional and easily available to communities. As security continues to present a real impediment to free movement, access to public services becomes more constrained as people cannot or do not travel. Thus, the possibility of re-establishing and improving access to public services should also entail a possible decentralization of services, especially those related to the issuance of ID cards, birth certificates and other key documents that may have been lost in the conflict but are essential and could help individuals recover more quickly. In boosting access to public service at the community level, and not just in metropolitan areas, the government will be able to provide for affected communities in a more holistic way. The decentralization process should also include moving government and public service staff so that they are close to the communities they serve.

Recommendations

- Invest in the provision of health care and education to ensure that quality services are provided to all people in the Lake Chad Basin.

- Provide mobile centres for the issuance of ID cards, birth certificates and other key documents.
- Strengthen platforms for participatory engagement in governance, especially for women and youth in rural areas.

Education

There was also a clear consensus on the role of education as a crucial aspect of a solution in the longer term. Uneducated people, in particular, youth, were cited as the most likely recruits for Boko Haram. And yet, the education system also emerged as one of the key elements of perceived marginalization and grievance. Participants noted that there was no tertiary educational institution and there were only two secondary schools in northern Borno, Nigeria. Additionally, the lack of harmonization between the Islamic and Western educational systems was repeatedly raised as a point of contention. The exclusion of graduates of Islamic schools from higher Western educational institutions was also noted as a source of grievance in Nigeria. The perceived injustices surrounding the educational system run deep and is a divisive factor in the conflict, which needs to be addressed for longer-term peace to hold. For example, religious leaders suggested that they participate in the development of new school curricula and/or educational reform to integrate the values of Islam in a modern (Western) education system.

The lack of a standardized and accredited system for Islamic schools was equally cited as a central challenge in preventing the spread of radical narratives. Islamic schools are playing an important role in the educational system, as well as in providing humanitarian and development support to many communities, but the lack of a framework to ensure the quality of teaching contributes to undermine the longer-term prospects of a well-informed generation of youth. For longer-term prospects of addressing the radical ideologies that persist throughout the region, more efforts need to be made in ensuring that the Islamic and Western education offered adopts a standardized quality assurance framework strengthen oversight and standardization of learning for children and youth. Religious leaders specifically voiced concerns about this issue and pointed out that many new Islamic schools are perceived to be created by preachers who are not originally from their communities. They reportedly tend to bring with them a more radical interpretation of Islam that is particularly influential among youth who seek a stronger sense of identity and belonging. In these schools, youth may find a collective sense of belonging and a shared narrative of marginalization and discrimination that fuels radicalization.

Recommendations

- Expand access to education, particularly in rural areas (such as island areas in Lake Chad).
- Review the educational system, especially in Nigeria, to provide an integrated and harmonized one that provides access to education for all, building on both Islamic and Western curricula.

Forced Migration and Displacement

Displacement has significantly affected the local economies across the region. Migration towards metropolitan areas has placed increased pressures on these cities in terms of competition over jobs and resources. Rural communities are further beleaguered by restrictions placed upon them by the military, limiting movement outside the communities. This is effectively restricting the amount of land that can be used for farming and agricultural production, which in turn hampers recovery efforts at the community level.

In Diffa, however, there is a widespread perception that refugees are catered to but that very little effort is made for host communities. This perception is partly fuelling a push by host communities in the region to advocate for IDPs and refugees returning to their communities of origin. In Diffa, these sentiments were also fuelled by the fact that displaced persons had settled on agricultural lands (as mentioned), which limited how host communities could cultivate them.

Finally, as displaced populations begin to return, in particular in Cameroon, this has resulted in an increased number of disputes in the community. These disputes frequently relate to access to shelter and land because returnees coming back to their communities of origin often find their houses inhabited, triggering tension between those who stayed and those who left. Those who stayed throughout the conflict often feel that returnees are more privileged due to the support they receive from NGOs and INGOs. The perceptions of unfairness between host communities and IDPs/refugees is further heightening these tensions.

Recommendations

- Harmonize measures for return and resettlement with support to victims of conflict and other vulnerable groups.
- Review the location of formal IDP camps and settlements to ensure that they encroach minimally on agricultural productivity.

International Assistance

The role of the international community was perceived differently among some of the different groups of stakeholders. Whereas the support was appreciated by CSOs and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), traditional rulers and religious leaders in Maiduguri questioned a range of practices by international organizations, most contentious of which was the perception that the international community provides food and medicine to Boko Haram. This perception evoked a strong emotive response among this group, because they felt that the international community came to help the victims of the conflict and not the perpetrators. Additionally, the international community was accused of working with churches but not mosques. Islamic religious leaders felt they were not adequately consulted in the work of the international community. Given their close proximity to the communities and their influence and networks, it is important that the international community engage this group of stakeholders in a continuous and systematic manner, especially in light of their willingness to help and support.

A prevailing narrative in many communities is that humanitarian and development partners mostly target support to displaced persons. Not only does this create tensions in the community, but it can further aggravate the situation for the host community. Host communities are frequently faced with price increases due to an increased demand for goods and services, and an increased purchasing power that displaced populations have in some communities as a result of cash-for-work programmes or the selling of items donated by humanitarian partners. An increased conflict-sensitive approach to humanitarian support was called for to ensure that humanitarian assistance target those who most need it, but without increasing tensions or widening divisions between different groups and communities.

Recommendations

- Regular engagements and meetings between the international community, traditional rulers and religious leaders. This engagement should be both at the project level (i.e. in specific communities) and at the strategic level (the state and regional levels).
- Enhance conflict sensitivity in humanitarian and development programming through more regular consultations with communities, including leveraging conflict analysis tools to inform programming.
- Create an accountability framework for results that include communities to ensure that ownership and oversight are vested in the intended beneficiaries.

Annex. Location of Community Consultations

