

Concept Note

High-Level Conference on the Lake Chad Region

Co-hosted by Germany, Nigeria, Norway, and the United Nations

Berlin, 3-4 September, 2018

Background

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

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

Following the Oslo Humanitarian Conference on Nigeria and the Lake Chad Region held in February 2017, at which US\$672 million in financial support was pledged for 2017 and beyond, the humanitarian response in the Lake Chad region was scaled up significantly: more than six million people were reached with assistance in 2017, and in north-east Nigeria a famine was averted. At the same time, regional cooperation to address factors driving the crisis was strengthened, including and particularly through the Consultative Group on Prevention and Stabilization in the Lake Chad Region, which grew out of the Oslo Conference and provides a strategic platform for discussion on crisis prevention and stabilization¹ in the region. In parallel, important initiatives have been undertaken by the respective governments, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the African Union and other actors to scale up development-oriented actions by integrating more risk-tolerance, flexibility and innovation in programme design.

Following the first meeting of the Consultative Group in Berlin in September 2017, sub-national actors from the region met in the framework of the "Lake Chad Governors' Forum" in Maiduguri in May 2018 in order to foster regional cross-border cooperation among decision-makers. The instigated political

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

process is aimed at contributing to the ongoing efforts of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the African Union to develop a full-fledged stabilization strategy for the region.

Strengthening collective efforts among the wide range of actors addressing the complex crisis in the Lake Chad region is a key priority: Humanitarian assistance has saved lives and prevented millions of people from slipping below emergency thresholds, and must be sustained. In order to resolve ongoing conflicts and build peace, political solutions to the crisis need to be found across borders. In parallel, more longer-term development investments are needed to re-establish civilian government presence and services, build resilience² and address the underlying vulnerabilities and conflict drivers.

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

Overall objectives

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

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

Program

The Conference will be a two-day event.

Ministers from the affected countries as well as Governors of the Lake Chad region will be invited alongside donors, key United Nations organizations, International and Regional Organizations, International Financial Institutions and civil society.

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

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

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

All thematic sessions will start with an introduction by the responsible co-host, followed by a panel discussion. There will be one representative from civil society in each panel, preferably from the affected countries, who *inter alia* will be responsible for bringing in perspectives from civil society discussions preceding the Conference.

Draft outline of the program:

Monday, 3rd September, 2018

Beginning: 08:30am (High-Level Opening at 10:00am)

End: 06:00pm

07:00 – 8:30pm Evening reception

Session	Issues in focus
<i>Key messages from Civil Society consultations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>De-brief on key messages from civil society consultations</i>
High Level Opening of the Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction and setting the scene. (Movie)• High-level intervention by the co-hosts and affected countries.
High-level panel on humanitarian assistance and protection of civilians	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Progress made and challenges remaining.• How to sustain humanitarian operations, ensure a principled response, strengthen protection of civilians and improve access.
High-level panel on crisis prevention and stabilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visualize the opportunities of crisis prevention and stabilization.• Added value of cross-border cooperation.• Contributions of the different ongoing political processes to design a comprehensive stabilization strategy in full ownership of the region.
High-level panel on building resilience for sustainable development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss opportunities to scale-up resilient and development-oriented activities in the Lake Chad Basin Region and durably reduce needs, risks, and vulnerabilities.
High-Level Interventions by Governors of Affected Countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perspectives on challenges and opportunities in the Lake Chad Region.
Delegations' statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Statements and pledging for the three thematic areas

Tuesday, 4th September, 2018:

Beginning: 08:30am

End: 05:00pm

<i>Civil Society Segment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share civil society perspectives on the Lake Chad region and highlight major concerns and gaps and needs across humanitarian, stabilization and crisis prevention and sustainable development.• Discuss recommendations for way forward from a civil society perspective.
Strategies for strengthening collaboration between affected countries and key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflect on conference outcomes and sketch way forward from a regional perspective
Closing session & Presentation of outcome statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conclusions and the way forward.