



Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery, and Resilience of the Boko Haram-Affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin Region

Third Meeting of the Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum for Regional Cooperation on Stabilization, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development

Final Joint Communiqué

From 4 to 5 October 2021, the third meeting of the Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum for Regional Cooperation on Stabilization, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development (hereafter the LCB Governors' Forum) was held in Yaoundé, Republic of Cameroon. The LCB Governors' Forum meeting was convened by the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and hosted by the Government of Cameroon, with technical support from the African Union Commission (AUC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Under the leadership of His Excellency, Joseph Dion Ngute, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Cameroon, the Forum was attended by the Governors of the Far North and North regions of Cameroon, the Hadjer-Lamis and Lac provinces of Chad, the Diffa region of Niger, and Borno State of Nigeria. Representatives of the Governors of Adamawa and Yobe States of Nigeria also attended. Also present at the Forum were representatives of the African Union (AU), the United Nations (UN) system, multilateral and bilateral institutions, donor governments, civil society organizations, and the media, amongst others.

During the two-day session, the Forum, made the following observations:

Expressed appreciation to His Excellency, Paul Biya, Head of State and President of the Republic of Cameroon for approving the hosting of the third Governors Forum, and for his hospitality.

Extended appreciation to His Excellency, Joseph Dion Ngute, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Cameroon, for his request that the whole assembly stand in observance of a minute of silence, in memory of the late President of Chad, Idriss Déby Itno for his efforts in fighting terrorism in the Lake Chad Region and the Sahel.

Extended appreciation to the Governors of the Far North and North regions of Cameroon for their hospitality.

Recognised substantial progress made in the implementation of stabilization, peacebuilding and sustainable development in the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) region since the

inaugural meeting of the LCB Governors' Forum in May 2018 in Maiduguri, Nigeria, under the chairmanship of the Governor of Borno State, Nigeria. The Forum further expressed appreciation to the Governor of Diffa region, Niger for his leadership and commitment in steering the Governors Forum from 2019 to 2021 amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and commends the acceptance of the chairpersonship of the LCB Governors' Forum by the Governor of the Far North Region, Cameroon.

Recalled the RSS strategic pillars, guiding principles, and objectives adopted at the First Regional Conference in N'Djamena, Chad in 2017 and reiterated the primary responsibility of States in the region and the Governors of the most affected states to protect the populations throughout their territories.

Further recalled relevant provisions of the Communiqué of the Peace and Security Council of the AU and the United Security Council Resolutions, which emphasise the intrinsic linkages between security, development and human rights as mutually reinforcing tenets for a comprehensive approach to preventing and responding to terrorism and insecurity in the region.

Commended the efforts of the national and sub-national governments and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), in the fight against terrorist groups in the region (i.e. Boko Haram and the Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP)), which has significantly degraded the operational capabilities of these terrorist groups and enhanced civilian protection.

Noted the emerging trend in the region of the increasing surrendering of ex-Boko Haram fighters, and the urgent necessity for them to be rehabilitated and reintegrated into the community, and called on LCB States, institutions and partners to take steps to meet this challenge, including through the provision of the necessary human and material resources.

Observed that, despite operational successes in the anti-terrorism effort, Boko Haram and other armed terrorist groups remain a threat to the countries of the region and, hence, highlighted the need to redouble efforts to completely eliminate the terrorist group.

Recognised the AU's unwavering commitment and support to the MNJTF as highlighted in the Communiqué of the 973rd meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council on the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram.

Acknowledged that the humanitarian situation in the region is compounded by development needs, notably: significant literacy deficits, economic crises, youth unemployment, increasingly frequent and severe weather events, and natural disasters and, further expressed concern that the situation has further deteriorated as a result of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and, in this regard, expressed the urgency for collective efforts in the effective response to, and recovery from, the pandemic, as part of addressing the multidimensional crises in the region.

Recalled the UN Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2573 (2021) and S/RES/2475 (2019) on the protection of civilians in armed conflicts, stressing the particular impact that armed conflict has on women, children (including as refugees and internally displaced persons), and other civilians who may have specific vulnerabilities (including persons with disabilities

and older persons), and the protection and assistance needs of all affected civilian populations.

Reaffirmed that the protection of the populations and the communities encompasses all activities aimed at addressing violence, coercion, deliberate deprivation and abuse for persons, groups and communities in the context of humanitarian crises, in compliance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence and within the framework of international law, and in particular, international human rights law (IHL), International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and Refugee Law.

Recognized the strategic objectives of the RSS and the Territorial Action Plans (TAPs) to address the root causes of the crisis in the LCB, through immediate, medium and long-term efforts, as well as the need for well-coordinated, multi-stakeholder and holistic action towards this end, and therefore encourages the effective implementation of the Strategy.

Underlined the imperative of the localization and institutionalization of the RSS through the TAPs and the renewed commitment of the National Steering Committees. The Forum therefore welcomes the launch at this Third Meeting of the eight TAPs by the Prime Minister of Cameroon, His Excellency Joseph Dion Ngute.

In the light of the progress made in the implementation of the RSS since its inception in 2018, including the recent successes in improving security and basic services in the region, and developing the TAPs, the LCB Governors' Forum agreed to:

- enhance local ownership of the RSS and the TAPs, and that their implementation shall primarily rest with the affected LCB Governors, and that to this end humanitarian, development and peace actors should align their activities with the priorities of the central and state/territorial governments, and peoples, of the region;
- firmly commit to joint efforts towards stabilizing, building peace and fostering sustainable development across the Lake Chad Basin through promoting dialogue and cross-border cooperation;
- remain firmly committed to the enhancement of cross-border security cooperation in order to facilitate cross border trade, enhance economic recovery and boost livelihoods;
- play its role as a primary mechanism for cross-border cooperation in the context of the implementation of the RSS and work closely with key stakeholders of the Lake Chad Basin region;
- continue joint reflection and information-sharing as ways of enhancing cross-border collaboration and mutually benefitting from existing good practices in the region;
- ensure the systematic and effective implementation of the TAPs that were launched at this Third Forum, in line with local and national development plans, and to periodically monitor the progress achieved;

- work with partners to redouble efforts to empower and provide better opportunities for women and youth in the region;
- facilitate the contribution of civil society and the engagement of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the implementation and monitoring of the TAPs;
- Emphasise the need to recharge the Lake Chad Basin with a view to improving the livelihood of the population of the region;
- urge partners to prioritize the provision of more military hardware and other resources to the MNJTF to enable it better provide the necessary security for the more effective implementation of the RSS and the TAPs;
- expand and deepen partnerships in the LCB region in order to gain resources that are required to scale up interventions without which the RSS and the TAPs cannot be optimally implemented;
- and, commit to a set of common regional priorities for stabilization, recovery and sustainable development, including but not limited to the conduct of community-based DDRRR, cross-border trade, greater investment in socio-economic opportunities; the empowerment of youth and women; good governance; and leveraging on the role of civil society for sustaining peace and development in the Lake Chad Basin region;

The Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum acknowledged the immense technical support provided by the African Union Commission and the United Nations Development Programme. The Forum and LCBC further wishes to acknowledge and expresses appreciation for the financial support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, the European Union and the African Development Bank (AfDB).

The Forum further expressed its appreciation to all other participants, for their participation and engagement during the meeting.

The Lake Chad Basin Governor's Forum agrees that the next annual Forum will be held in Territorial Action Plans the Republic of Chad.

Done on this 5th day of October 2021, in Yaoundé, Republic of Cameroon.