

Berlin Declaration

At a meeting held this 4th day of September 2017 in Berlin-Germany

We, the Network of Civil Society Organizations and International NGOs operating in the Lake Chad Basin:

- Considering that the Lake Chad basin is faced with a complex humanitarian crisis, since the Boko Haram conflict took root in 2014 in North-eastern Nigeria with negative repercussions in the Far North of Cameroon, Western Chad and South-eastern Niger;
- Considering that the State of Borno and the neighbouring countries of Nigeria, namely Cameroon, Niger, and Chad, continue to face insurgency and counterinsurgency actions leading to death, insecurity and violations of human rights, the worsening plight of vulnerable civilians and the emergence of waves of displacement;
- Taking into account the willingness of donors to provide vital assistance to victims and communities affected by the crisis, as was evidenced by the Oslo conference held in Norway by Norway, Nigeria, Germany, and the United Nations, held on 23-24 February 2017, raising awareness on one of the most serious humanitarian crises in the world;
- Noting that six months after the Oslo conference, actual resource mobilization for immediate humanitarian response is still falling short of needs, dampening the hopes aroused by the conference, since living conditions are still dire for many and lives continue to be lost;
- Recognising the efforts of stakeholders to go beyond humanitarian assistance and find more durable solutions through prevention and stabilization,

The undersigned recommend the following to the Oslo Advisory Group:

- in the short term -

1. Alongside any prevention and stabilization efforts, responding to humanitarian needs remains an immediate priority, with a particular focus on protection and human rights, including: safety and security of affected persons, prevention of - and response to - gender-based violence, and community-based protection mechanisms;
2. Guarantee adequate, needs-based funding in all Lake Chad Basin countries, i.e. full funding of the Humanitarian Response Plans;
3. Ensure access for humanitarian organisations and respect for international humanitarian law;
4. Recognize comprehensive education and livelihood interventions as crucial precursors of stabilization, with a special focus on reducing economic pressure on Boko Haram recruitments, including for youth and ex-combatants;
5. Ensure access to land for displaced persons and returnees for agricultural activities where security permits;
6. Ensure that all returns are well-informed, voluntary and dignified;
7. Increase food and nutritional support and facilitate access to quality social services (health, water, environment, etc.);
8. Support and strengthen the role of youth and women as actors in peacebuilding processes;
9. Mainstream conflict-sensitivity into the response;
10. Strengthen dialogue with local leaders and committees and participatory response, ensuring accountability to local populations and authorities;
11. Ensure fair access of national and local civil society to humanitarian funding, leveraging their local expertise and presence for response, and further strengthening their capacities to support sustainability;
12. Integrate the Civil Society Network for the Lake Chad Basin into the Advisory Group to better follow up on the recommendations of the Oslo and Berlin Conferences;
13. Support the operationalization of the Civil Society Network for the Lake Chad Basin in order to ensure effective monitoring of accountability to beneficiaries, humanitarian community, and donors; mobilization of funds and their use; and enhance coordination between the different NGO groups of each country in the Lake Chad Basin;
14. Ensure funding for the activities of UNHAS, including all operationally relevant routes;
15. Create and support a humanitarian fund for early recovery and development in all four countries of Lake Chad Basin;

16. Create and support the harmonization of regional approaches for the prevention and stabilization in the Lake Chad region, for planning and response.
17. Underline that efforts on reconstruction and stability have to focus especially on rural areas deprived of basic and social services etc., often even since before the beginning of the current crisis;
18. Develop a work plan for the follow-up to the Oslo and Berlin conferences, with indicators and milestones, allowing the transparent monitoring of the implementation of the commitments made at that Oslo and Berlin conferences;

- in the mid-term -

1. Consolidate and enhance access to quality education;
2. Support and intensify sustainable economic activities;
3. Support well-informed, voluntary, and dignified return and re-integration programmes;
4. Establish and strengthen peacebuilding programmes, including support to community-driven development and reconstruction programmes; the reintegration of demobilized former combatants; and inter-communal dialogue;
5. Support community dialogue mechanisms for early warning and early action to prevent violence.

Done in Berlin, 4 September 2017, by the participants.