



OCHA

## ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment 2016

### **Ending Needs in the Lake Chad Basin: Working Together to Leave No One Behind**

OCHA, the United States Permanent Mission to the UN, and the European Union

27 June 2016, 18:15 – 19:30

Conference Room 12, First Basement, Conference Building, United Nations, New York

This side event is proposed in keeping with the theme of this year's ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment: *"Restoring Humanity and Leaving No One Behind: Working together to reduce people's humanitarian need, risk and vulnerability."*

### **Background and Objectives**

Humanitarian needs in Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin continue to grow, with some 9.2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and some 6 million people in need of protection. The area is home to Africa's fastest growing displacement crisis: some 2.7 million people having been driven from their homes, including some 210,000 Nigerian refugees who have fled to neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and Niger. Despite these needs, humanitarian response plans for the region are woefully under-funded (only 16 per cent of the US \$535 million required for humanitarian assistance are available).

**The crisis emanates from three issues: violent extremism, abject poverty and climate change.** Experts identify Chad, Niger and Nigeria among the countries at "extreme climate risk". The shrinking of Lake Chad is one of the most striking examples of environmental degradation and has contributed to crop failures, livestock deaths, collapsed fisheries, soil salinity and poverty. Water levels of Lake Chad have reportedly dropped by 80 per cent since 1963. Population growth in the Lake Chad Basin is estimated between 2.5 per cent and 3 per cent—placing significant additional pressure on resources. With 60 per cent of the population under 25 years, the lack of education, unemployment, poverty and exclusion make fertile ground for disenfranchisement and violent extremism. Yet, Overseas Development Assistance, particularly for countries at the bottom of the Human Development Index, such as Chad and Niger, are well below levels warranted by fragility assessments and development needs.

**There is broad agreement that addressing the underlying drivers of the conflict is as pressing as responding to humanitarian needs.** Mobilizing greater development investment, and securing political commitment to tackle the root causes of the crisis, will be central to weakening the grip of violent extremism on the region. Strengthening economic opportunities and access to education, key to securing the stability and prosperity of the region, are also at the heart of responding to the aspirations of affected people who strive to be active participants in their own future. Community based protection mechanisms need to be reinforced to enhance confidence among communities and their state institutions, and to strengthen the rule of law and governance. Greater support from donors and the international community must be secured: despite immense humanitarian and development needs, and a dire prognosis regarding the likely evolution of the crisis, the Lake Chad Basin remains one of the "most overlooked" regions in the world.

**The side-event will aim to bring diverse actors together, to explore how best to achieve collective outcomes for people affected by crises.** By placing the people of the Lake Chad Basin at the center, asking what it would take to reduce their risks and vulnerabilities and improve their development prospects, and then charting a course for collaboration with a diverse group of actors to achieve it, the event aims to recommend ways to address immediate needs in times of crisis, while also working actively to move people out of crisis and on to a path toward the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### **Discussion points**

Panelists at the side event will consider, from their different perspectives, how to better save lives today and tomorrow, addressing the following key questions:

- **“Responding to the aspirations of affected people”**- *What are the aspirations of affected communities? What do they expect of their Governments and the international community?*
- **“Supporting resilience”**- *How can we collectively build people’s resilience, while responding to immediate humanitarian needs? What development action is required during the humanitarian phase?*
- **“Emergency development”** - *What type of development is required today to respond to the root causes of the crisis and to reduce humanitarian need in the long run? How can social safety nets be used to tackle poverty? How can climate change and environmental degradation be addressed? How can livelihoods and access to education be promoted?*
- **“Securing political commitment and engagement”** - *What initiatives are Governments taking to address the root causes of the crisis? How can collaboration with the international community be reinforced to strengthen these efforts?*
- **“Securing the right type of international support”** - *What are Governments doing to harness the capacities – and respond to the aspirations – of affected people? How can the international community help?*

### **Intended outcomes/conclusions/recommendations**

**The side-event will consider the Lake Chad Basin in the scope of the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) core responsibilities to leave no one behind, to end need and to prevent and end conflicts.** It will build on the side-event on the Lake Chad Basin, held at the WHS, and will call on Member States and operational partners to take action, and to operationalize the WHS core commitments in this fragile region.

**The side-event will aim to bring diverse actors together across mandates, sectors and institutions to explore how best to achieve collective outcomes for people affected by crises.** The event will contribute to considerations on (i) how the international community can provide assistance in a way that builds people’s resilience and puts their aspirations at the heart of our work; (ii) how affected Governments can structure their support (e.g. social safety nets) for maximum effect, and ensure their leadership on this issue; (iii) how development actors can provide a holistic and well-targeted response (climate change, poverty, etc.), while also working actively to move people out of crises and on to a path toward the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**This will help chart a course for collaboration between this diverse group of actors, placing the people of the Lake Chad Basin at the center of the inquiry,** and asking what different stakeholders can do to reduce their risks and vulnerabilities and improve their development prospects. The event will thus be an opportunity for political, humanitarian, and development actors to jointly look at what a common approach means in practice – and what different stakeholders can contribute and also require. Successful collaboration in the Lake Chad Basin region could serve as a very useful “best practice” for other contexts – if we get it right.

### **Format**

Following the opening remarks, the moderator will invite the panelists to intervene before giving to the participants an opportunity to ask questions from the floor as well as via Twitter.

### **Opening remarks:**

- United States Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Samantha Power

### **Moderator:**

- Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sahel, Mr. Toby Lanzer

### **Panel composition:**

- Minister of Humanitarian Action and Disaster Management of Niger, H.E. Magagi Laouan
- Emergency Relief Coordinator and UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Stephen O’Brien
- Director General of ECHO, Ms. Monique Pariat
- UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Mr. Volker Turk
- World Bank Senior Regional Adviser for the Africa Region, Ms. Lynne Sherburne-Benz
- President of the non-governmental organization AGIR+21, Ms. Aichatou Jariri

### **Contact**

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