African Union

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE STABILIZATION, RECOVERY & RESILIENCE OF THE BOKO HARAM-AFFECTED AREAS OF THE LAKE CHAD BASIN REGION

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ABBREVIATIONS

AfDB   African Development Bank

AU   African Union

CBO   Community-based organizations

CIMIC   Civil-Military Cooperation

CSO   Civil society organizations

DDRR   Disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation, and reintegration

HDP   Humanitarian, development, and peace

IOM   International Organization for Migration

ISG   International Support Group

LCB   Lake Chad Basin

LCBC   Lake Chad Basin Commission

MHPSS   Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

MNJTF   Multinational Joint Task Force

NGO   Non-governmental organizations

OCHA   Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

PWG   Pillar Working Groups

RSF   Regional Stabilization Facility

SPRR   Screening, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration

TAP   Territorial action plans

UNDP   United Nations Development Programme

UNODC   United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UNSC   UN Security Council

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FOREWORD
by Lake Chad Basin Commission

It is my honour to introduce the 2020 Annual Report of the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery, and Resilience of the Boko Haram-Affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin Region.

The Strategy was adopted by the Lake Chad Basin Commission and endorsed by the Africa Union Commission in 2018. It represents a collective effort for overall stabilization and interventions to secure early recovery and long-term resilience and development.

As I write, every day around the Lake Chad Basin, communities continue to suffer the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency. These communities have long endured humanitarian, development, and security challenges. In 2020, the region has witnessed considerable number of attacks. This is a continuous reminder to all of us of the need to continue working in support to our Member States and their communities, for a timely and effective response.

Furthermore, like the rest of the world, in 2020, these communities were severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. With the disruption of economic activities, including agricultural production, food security, cross-border trade, tourism, foreign investment flows, macroeconomic stability, peace and security, the pandemic aggravates existing inequalities and vulnerabilities.

Notwithstanding these challenges and instabilities affecting the region, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, with the unwavering engagement of international, regional, and local partners and actors, spearheaded the implementation of the Strategy.

The Strategy constitutes the overarching framework for all partners in the region that are willing to support the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the African Union Commission and most of all the Governors, as custodians of the

Strategy, to coordinate stabilization, recovery, and resilience interventions in the Lake Chad Basin region. The Strategy's implementation requires political, technical, and financial collaboration at all levels, from the international level to the regional, national, and local levels, providing clarity and guidance around roles and opportunities for each partner to support this overall effort.

Following the inception phase in 2019, and one year of implementation in 2020, the foundational basis for medium- and longer-term implementation are laid, partnerships are being built across the humanitarian, development and peace spectrum, and a New Way of Working is shaping the response to the Basin region crisis.

This 2020 Annual Report allows to showcase clear evidence about progress made and the increased engagement of partners to align their initiatives under THE Strategy. However, this first year of implementation also revealed essential gaps that we will need to jointly address to gain further impact as we move forward.

In 2021 and going forward, the implementation of the Territorial Action Plans across the eight territories under the Strategy will constitute a key priority. Each plan offers a comprehensive approach to implementing the Strategy, tailored for each territory's specific needs and multidimensional challenges. An inclusive process led to the development of the Territorial Action Plans. Therefore, we call for an inclusive and coordinated process between all regional and national stakeholders and partners to discuss the next steps and the required technical and financial support for the implementation of the plan.

For the success of the Strategy, we call for a continued political, technical, and financial support, that will mobilize the necessary resources in a consistent and sustained manner for the 5 years duration of the Strategy.

It is my profound hope that the implementation of the Strategy will gain even more momentum in 2021 and the upcoming years, and that we will continue to collaborate to ensure that the communities of the Lake Chad Basin are at the centre of our joint response and their issues on the agenda of policy and decision-makers.

Ambassador Mamman Nuhu
Executive Secretary, LCBC,
and Head of Mission, MNJTF
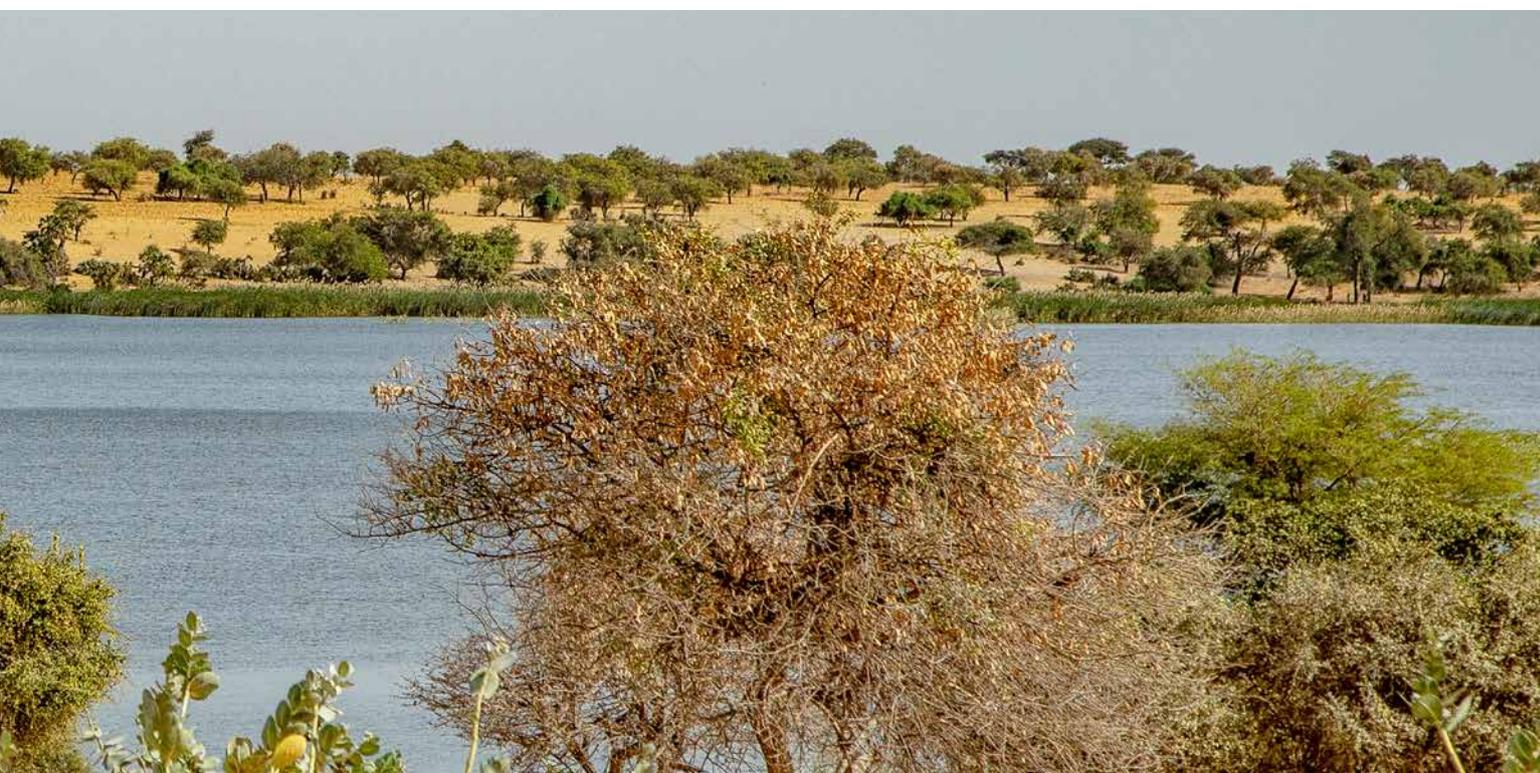
FOREWORD
by the African Union Commission

I am pleased to present the 2020 report on the implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience of Boko Haram-Affected Areas in the Lake Chad Basin (RSS).

Since the First Conference on the Development of a Framework for a Regional Stabilisation Strategy in November 2017, the African Union Commission has supported efforts led by the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) to ensure a transition from active military engagement to stabilization, recovery, and resilience. Now in its third year since adoption, the implementation of the RSS has gradually started to register some reasonable and palpable gains derived from coordinated actions underlined by the nexus between peace, humanitarian, and development.

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 made some adjustments in RSS interventions inevitable. Thus, stakeholders and development partners faced the reality that affected communities in the lake Chad Basin, in addition to the challenges from the pandemic, were also confronted by the consequences of the activities of extremist groups including threats to livelihood.

It is in this regard that modest successes were achieved in the stabilization of the Lake Chad Basin trough the Member States of the LCBC in spite of the generally restrictive environment occasioned by the pandemic and episodes of turbulence in the security environment.

To a great extent, this 2020 Report demonstrates the resolve by the LCBC with the support of the African Union Commission to bring meaning to efforts to anchor a coordinated deployment of interventions in the Lake Chad Basin. It further outlines the commitment and endeavours of the various stakeholders committed to stabilizing the region. This display of attuned leadership has given practical impetus to the continuing quest to stabilize the region.

Ambassador Bankole Adeoye
Commissioner, Political Affairs,
Peace and Security
African Union Commission

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In August 2018, the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the African Union Commission agreed on the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery & Resilience of the Boko Haram-affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin Region (RSS). The RSS has a five-years' duration; it covers eight territories[1] and is articulated around nine Pillars and forty Strategic Objectives. This inaugural progress report presents the RSS implementation progress from 1 December 2019 until 31 December 2020, and the critical challenges encountered and recommendations for key stakeholders.

The RSS formulates a comprehensive regional and cross-border strategy to address the current crisis worsened by the Boko Haram insurgency in the Lake Chad Basin at regional, national, and territorial levels. It seeks to generate policies and programmes under a common approach and an inclusive framework for all stakeholders to support a timely, coordinated, and effective transition from stabilisation to early recovery and the resumption of stalled development processes.

Over the last decade, the four riparian countries of Lake Chad Basin (Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria) have been experiencing various challenges, exacerbated by repeated incidences of violence from the Boko Haram terrorist group. In response to the crisis, the four affected countries and the Benin Republic, in 2015, resolved to contribute troops, with the support of the African Union Commission, for the reorganization and operationalization of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram. Despite the significant progress made by the MNJTF, there is a consensus by all concerned stakeholders that overall success of the collective effort will be contingent upon the implementation of overall stabilisation programme by the affected countries.

This report shows that significant progress was made regarding the institutionalization of the RSS at the regional level, and gradually institutionalisation at the territorial level. This progress includes the establishment or continued support to the following structures: the Secretariat, the Steering Committee, the Regional Task Force with its Thematic Clusters, the Governors' Forum (created in 2018), platforms for civil society organizations and, a cell for civil-military cooperation. Furthermore, the Territorial Action Plans (TAPs) development was initiated and will be finalized and presented at the third Governors' Forum, which will be hosted by the Governor of Far North of Cameroon in late 2021. The TAPs are at the heart of the Strategy's offer

Key challenges have been identified related to the RSS implementation, such as:

- the political framework.
- effective coordination.
- the level of institutionalisation.
- the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.
- the security situation.
- operational support.
- efficient information management, monitoring and reporting.

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[1] The eight territories are North and Far North Regions in Cameroon, Lac and Hadjer-Lamis Provinces in Chad, Diffa Region in Niger and Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States in Nigeria.

to the people living in the crisis-affected areas of the Lake Chad Basin. They are the foundational building blocks for RSS localization and implementation under the custodianship of the Governors. This report also includes information on the progress for the nine Pillars, based on the information provided by the members of the Regional Task Force. An annexed table provides more detail on the ongoing initiatives, linked to forty Strategic Objectives.

Despite these challenges, the LCBC, the African Union Commission and, the eight Governors can now accelerate the implementation of the Strategy's nine Pillars. Significant opportunities exist for stakeholders to move from the current ad hoc nature of interventions to a more coordinated and collaborative strategic approach that would enable more efficient and adequate resources and expertise through the RSS coordination framework and structures across territorial, national and regional levels.

However, the LCBC and the African Union Commission recognize the need to accelerate some specific initiatives, such as:

- a political dialogue on the role of Governments at different levels.
- cross-border interventions.
- enhanced civil-military cooperation.
- knowledge management, including through a dedicated platform.

Some recommendations are developed for decision-makers, to ensure the necessary support for the RSS implementation, and a call is made to the International Support Group to advocate for their implementation.

1. United Nations Resident Coordinators can support coordination efforts at the national level, promoting stakeholder engagement for the further institutionalization of the RSS.

2. The current RSS Steering Committee membership should be expanded to include relevant national ministries that are responsible for stabilisation, recovery, and resilience initiatives.

3. Additional capacities are required to bridge technical-level coordination among the Regional Task Force and national actors to ensure timely and quality monitoring and reporting.

4. RSS platform for civil society organizations has been established and should be the entry point for engaging civil society in the RSS implementation.

5. RSS coordination structures should be communicated to implementing partners and stakeholders for more effective results.

6. Steering Committee should deliberate on the most appropriate channels for the funding of the RSS across all 9 Pillars, in a way that contributes to aid effectiveness, coherence and consistency

7. The Governors' Offices have a central role in the RSS implementation and their capacities should be assessed and built accordingly. For example, this will require dedicated resources, to ensure a minimum standard of reporting and effective coordination with partners.

8. Building longer-term capacity at the LCBC is a top priority for RSS implementation, with a clear sustainability plan to ensure smooth take over off RSS programmatic responsibilities by LCBC.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

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The year 2020 witnessed a dramatic increase in violent attacks by extremist groups in the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) region (Figure 1). Most of the attacks occurred in, or close to, the borders shared by Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, with extremist fighters frequently moving across international boundaries. For instance, on 20 November 2020, Islamic State's West Africa Province members attacked Magumeri, an agrarian town approximately 50 kilometres from Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, in Northeast Nigeria.[2] Nigerian government forces repelled the attackers. On 28 November 2020, the extremist Boko Haram group attacked some rice farmers in Zabarmari, approximately 27 kilometres from Maiduguri, killing over 100 civilians. No government troops were present in the area at the time of the attack. These attacks are just some of the most recent examples of the surge in assaults on troops and the civilian population in the region that occurred in 2020.

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[2]   Murtala Abdullahi. "Troops Repel ISWAP Attack in Magumeri," Humangle, 21 November 2020. https://humangle.ng/troops-repel-iswap-attack-in-magumeri/

[3]   As referenced by https://africacenter.org/spotlight/boko-haram-violence-against-civilians-spiking-in-northern-cameroon/.

FIGURE 1
Violent incidents in the LCB from 2009 to 2020
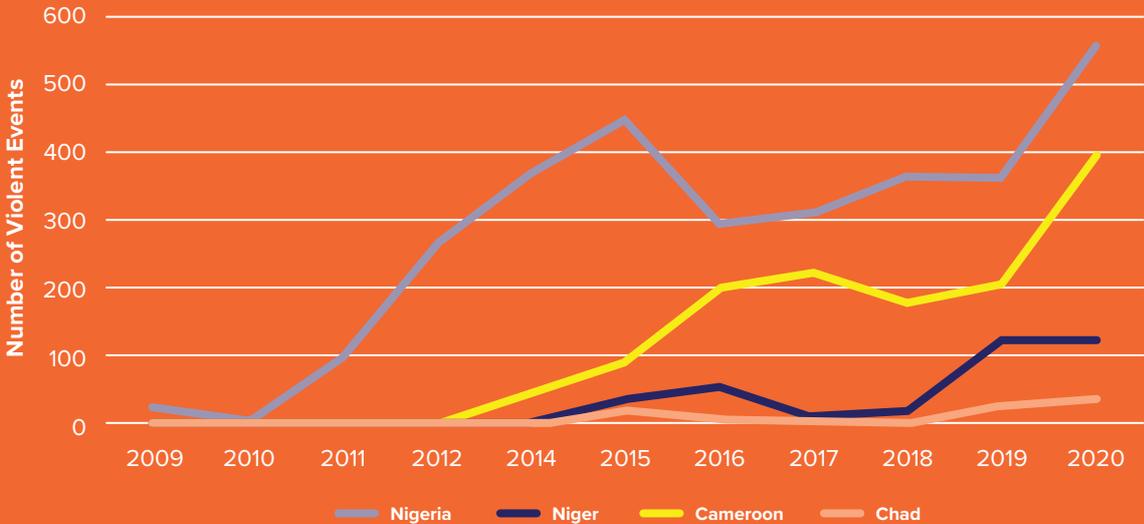
Data source: Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, year ending September 30, 2020.[3]

This 2020 surge in attacks by extremist groups makes it clear that the crisis haunting the Basin region for almost a decade shows little sign of abating. Multiple factors combine to trigger significant population displacement. According to the Displacement Tracking Matrix maintained by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), as of 30 December 2020 Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria hosted over five million displaced persons, including internally displaced persons, refugees, returnees and third country nationals. Three quarters of these affected people shelter in Nigeria, which is by far the most populous of the four nations.[4]

In the light of these serious challenges in the region, the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and the African Union (AU) acknowledged the need for a common regional response to address the crisis and ultimately agreed on the *Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery & Resilience of the Boko Haram-affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin Region* (RSS) in August 2018. The Strategy combines the common military response against violent extremist armed groups led by the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), through the various national security and defence forces in the four countries, with a cross-border civilian effort to consolidate military gains. In July 2019, the Regional Stabilization Facility (RSF) for LCB, a multi-donor facility, was officially launched to support implementation of the initial phases of the RSS. Under the management of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), this Facility was operationalized in October 2019 and has since received funding from the governments of Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and the European Union.

This inaugural RSS report details the progress made in implementing the RSS during the period from 1 December 2019 to 31 December 2020.[5] It

is based on information and data provided by key stakeholders involved in the operationalization of the Strategy, including members of the Regional Task Force. Further details regarding the approach and methodology used in preparing this report are available, as is a summary of the questionnaire responses provided by Regional Task Force members (Annex A).

In early 2020, the global COVID-19 pandemic struck the Basin region. Measures to contain and mitigate the spread of COVID-19, such as travel restrictions and social distancing guidelines, affected the provision of humanitarian assistance and stabilization interventions and hampered the efforts of the RSS Implementing Partner actors across the region. Despite limitations imposed by COVID-19 containment measures, as well as other challenges including rising insecurity, substantial progress has been made towards the institutionalization of the RSS. The foundational steps have been made for the full implementation of the RSS for the Strategy to gain momentum in 2021.

This report commences with a brief overview in this introductory chapter of the RSS, including its evolution, objectives, and inception and initial implementation phases. The main body of the report examines the activities and progress made towards full implementation of the RSS with a specific focus on the process of institutionalization of the RSS across all three levels as the foundation for full and effective implementation. The report analyses and identifies implementation gaps and provides suggested actions to be taken to address them. It concludes with a series of recommendations formulated to assist the RSS Steering Committee and other RSS stakeholders in identifying areas and issues that require increased attention and prompt action.

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[4]   IOM DTM. "West and Central Africa — Lake Chad Basin Crisis Monthly Dashboard 27 (30 December 2020), 30 December 2020. https://dtm.iom. int/reports/west-and-central-africa-%E2%80%94-lake-chad-basin-crisis-monthly-dashboard-27-30-december-2020.

[5]   The RSS mandates the Secretariat to submit an annual progress report to the RSS Steering Committee (see the RSS pp. 57-58). This report builds upon the inception report submitted to the inaugural Committee meeting on 27 November 2019.

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1.1 Overview and Evolution of the Strategy

The RSS emerged from an acknowledgement by affected states that national and military approaches alone were inadequate to address the challenges afflicting the Boko Haram-affected areas of the LCB region. A timeline tracking from 2015 can illustrate the emergence and consolidation of the RSS (Box 1).

Under the overarching political coordination and leadership of the AU, in 2015 the governments of the Member States of the LCBC and the Republic of Benin established the MNJTF to respond to the terrorism and insurgency activities of Boko Haram factions. The Concept of Operations (CONOPS), developed by the AU, outlines details regarding political oversight, command structures, objectives, tasks, and mission support. On 3 March 2015, the AU Peace and Security Council authorized the MNJTF's operation under LCBC civil oversight. It endorsed the CONOPS and stressed the imperative for a close civil-military coordination to facilitate the early stabilization of the situation on the ground."[6]

In line with the MNJTF's mandate outlined in the CONOPS, the AU Commission and the LCBC realized there was a need to develop a regional approach to stabilization to complement military offensives. Further, the LCBC would need to develop capacities for civil-military cooperation to facilitate the humanitarian operations, the delivery of assistance to affected populations, and the implementation of stabilization programmes.

Following an extensive consultation process, led by the LCBC and AU Commission with the support of local and international partners, the RSS emerged. It was validated by LCBC Council of Ministers in August 2018 and endorsed by the African Union Peace and Security Council in December 2018. The RSS formulates a comprehensive cross-border strategy for meeting the current crisis in the LCB at regional, national, and territorial levels. It is centred on the need for civil-military cooperation in creating a safe environment that ensures the protection of civilians: It focuses on the return of displaced persons, the provision of humanitarian assistance, the implementation of stabilization efforts, and the establishment of state authority in the affected territories. Ultimately, the RSS aims to enable long-term sustainable development in the eight LCB territories of the four affected countries: the Far North and North Regions of Cameroon; Lac and Hajder-Lamis Provinces of Chad; Diffa Region of Niger; and Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa States of Nigeria.

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[6]   Peace and Security Council, 489th Meeting, 3 March 2015 (PSC/PR/COMM.CDLXXXIX)

BOX 1

The Timeline of the RSS to 2019

3 MARCH 2015
At its 489th meeting, the AU Peace and Security Council authorizes the deployment of the MNJTF in the LCB Region for an initial period of 12 months. The Council expresses its support to the Member States of the LCBC and Benin in creating a safe and secure environment and contributing to the stabilization in the crisis-affected areas.

6 SEPTEMBER 2017
The Oslo Consultative Group on Prevention and Stabilization in the Lake Chad Basin meets for the first time in Berlin, Germany.

12 OCTOBER 2017
The UN Secretary-General addresses the UNSC, pointing out that in the Basin region 8.5 million people require humanitarian assistance and calling for the development of a regional strategy to address the root causes of the crisis.

MAY 2018
The AUC, LCBC with financial support from the GIZ deploy a Joint Expert Team to the Lake Chad countries to assess the situation and propose strategic objectives for the elaboration of a regional strategy. The LCBC and AU review the expert team's report and recommendations and submit it to the LCBC Council of Ministers at the Inter-Ministerial Conference of representatives of the four Boko Haram-affected Lake Chad countries in August 2018. The Governors of the eight worst-affected areas around the Lake Chad meet in Maiduguri, Nigeria, to discuss common challenges and formally inaugurate the Governors' Forum for Regional Cooperation on Stabilization, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development (the Governors' Forum).

SEPTEMBER 2018
The High-Level Conference on the Lake Chad Region in Berlin calls for more coherence and coordination.

MAY 2019
The LCBC approves establishment of a Stabilization Secretariat within the Framework of the Regional Stabilization Facility that is led by UNDP with the technical support of the AU Commission.

16-18 JULY 2019
The second Governors' Forum meeting convenes with support from the AU Commission, UNDP and the RSS Secretariat. The Forum hosts the launch of UNDP's Regional Stabilization Facility, a multi-donor fund established to support the implementation of the RSS.

FEBRUARY 2017
Oslo Humanitarian Conference.

31 MARCH 2017
UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2349 calls for the development of a regional strategy for the LCB.

30 AUGUST 2017
The UN Secretary-General presents a report to the UNSC, stressing the challenges arising from Boko Haram's terrorist activities in the Basin region.

13 SEPTEMBER 2017
The UN Secretary-General presents a report to the UNSC emphasizing the urgency of the situation and the importance of addressing the root causes of the crisis.

2-4 NOVEMBER 2017
The AU Commission, the LCBC, and development partners organize the first conference on the *Development of a Framework for a Regional Stabilization Strategy.* This conference initiated the process that led to the RSS.

APRIL 2018
The AU and LCBC, in collaboration with the IOM, the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the UNDP, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), hold a workshop to discuss paths towards a regional strategy on the SPRR of persons associated with Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region.

30 AUGUST 2018
The LCBC Council of Ministers validate the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience of the Boko Haram-affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin Region.

8 DECEMBER 2018
The AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) endorses the Strategy as an essential step in both creating subregional ownership of the response to the LCB region crisis, and for realizing the vision outlined by the AU's Agenda 2063, the UN Agenda 2030 and the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel.

18-20 JUNE 2019
The LCBC and AUC with financial support from the GIZ convenes the Regional Consultative Forum in Niamey, Niger with representatives of civil society, including women's and youth organizations, as well as traditional and religious leaders and academics of the LCB.

27 NOVEMBER 2019
The LCBC convenes the inaugural meeting of the Regional Stabilization Strategy Steering Committee in N'Djamena, Chad.

RSS Intervention Pillars

The strategy formulates 40 Strategic Objectives anchored in Nine Pillars of intervention, namely:

PILLAR 1
Political Cooperation

PILLAR 2
Security and Human Rights

PILLAR 3
Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation, Reinsertion and Reintegration of Persons associated with Boko Haram

PILLAR 4
Humanitarian Assistance

PILLAR 5
Governance and the Social Contracts

PILLAR 6
Socioeconomic Recovery and Environmental Sustainability

PILLAR 7
Education, Learning and Skills

PILLAR 8
Prevention of Violent Extremism and Building Peace

PILLAR 9
Empowerment and Inclusion of Women and Youth

1.2 The RSS Objective and Approach

The Strategy provides a framework for regional cooperation, coordination, and harmonization of the four LCBC Member States' efforts towards stabilization, recovery, and resilience in the Boko Haram crisis-affected areas of the Lake Chad Basin region. The Strategy is predicated upon the 'New Way of Working' and 'Whole of Society' approaches to foster a strong humanitarian, development, and peace (HDP) nexus. It recognizes the imperative for local, national, and regional ownership, leadership, coordination, and partnerships. Further, it reiterates:

The need to plan and sequence the handover of territory from military to civilian control, the requirement of working with and through subregional authorities with delegated competences, and the logic of concentrating resources to maximize impact, all argue for an area-based approach to the localization of the Strategy. A localization of the Strategy will, in turn, require domestication and local ownership, and enhance the prospects for effective and sustainable results.[7]

The Strategy consists of Nine Pillars of intervention (Box 2) with Forty Strategic Objectives (Annex B). Its broad and ambitious scope bears testament to the vast dimensions of the task to overcome this regional crisis. It requires large investments and a long-term concerted and coordinated effort. It implies a need to build and consolidate regional capacities and structures to manage the implementation of a common regional crisis response and the localization of similar structures to ensure regional-national and territorial policy and programme interaction. Importantly, the Strategy calls for the institutionalization of a regional stabilization capacity within the LCBC, expanding the organization's scope to focus on security, peace, and development.

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[7] The RSS, p.22.

1.3 The RSS Levels and Phases

The RSS operates at multiple levels – regional, national, and territorial. The regional level focuses on five goals. First is the establishment of the RSS Secretariat with the human resources to management and coordinate RSS implementation across the different levels insuring consistency in approach and methodology by all actors. Then the focus is on institutionalization of the RSS governance and coordination structures and facilitation of regional and cross-border cooperation. Fourth is the set up and roll out of regional enabling techniques including monitoring, evaluation and reporting tools. The fifth goal is promotion of the New Way of Working and cooperation among HDP actors, while strengthening cooperation among military, community, and humanitarian efforts in the LCB region.

At the national level, focuses on national level coordination and fostering cooperation and coordination among HDP actors through existing coordination structures. These unifying efforts intend to bring groups together to support RSS implementation including budgetary and programmatic prioritization by government and by implementing actors, to ensure alignment with RSS implementation frameworks. The existing national coordination structure for development and humanitarian cooperation will serve as the national governance and coordination structure for RSS, such as national steering committees.

The territorial and local levels address initiatives to be conducted in the eight target Boko Haram-affected areas, under the leadership of the eight Governors who are the custodians of territorial action plans (TAPs). The establishment of the Pillar Working Groups and Stabilization Units within the Governors' Offices are key requirements for effective localization of the RSS at the territorial level for measurement of local level effect. As much as possible, the RSS would rely on existing structures, align with ongoing initiatives, and strengthen specific capacity to avoid overburdening the Governors' Offices.

The Strategy is planned for an initial period of five years, divided in two phases – an inception phase and an implementation phase. These phases should be conceived as partially overlapping and not serial (Figure 2). Each phase consists of two stages: The inception phase comprises the launch of the RSS stage and the short to medium-term initiatives stage. The implementation phase involves a medium and then a long-term implementation stage. Each phase and its stages are further described below.

FIGURE 2
RSS phases and stages

INCEPTION PHASE
Short to Medium-Term

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE
Medium to Long-Term
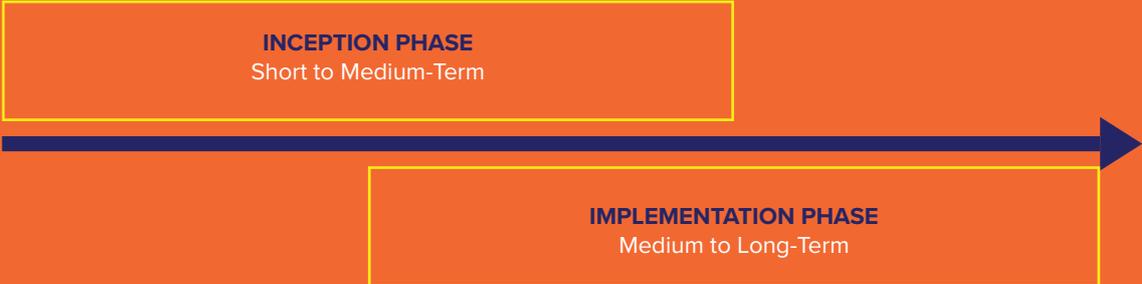
1.3.1 The Inception Phase

Short to Medium-Term: The 2019 RSS Inception Report addressed in detail the launch of the Strategy, which focused on consultation and sensitization activities. The aim of this stage was to secure the endorsement of the Strategy by different stakeholders including Governors, national governments, regional organizations, international partners, and civil society organizations (CSOs). The launching stage is being closely followed by the short to medium-term actions to ensure the establishment of structures, frameworks, and tools for RSS implementation. Some of these actions include recruitment of capacity for the Secretariat and establishment of the Regional Task Force of implementing partnerships and the Cluster working groups. Further work has involved the development and elaboration of the TAPs and establishment of platforms for cross-border dialogue and exchange including systems to enable cross-border interactions and knowledge-sharing. Throughout this phase, actors at various levels participated in development of a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework for the Strategy and its outcomes.

The role out of the inception phase was supported by the AUC, through the mobilisation of political buy-in of the member states and increasing the visibility of the Strategy within international and regional actors such as the United Nations and the AU RECs in the West and Central Africa. The Progress in the implementation of the Strategy will also be presented to the AU Peace and Security Council in 2021.

1.3.2 The Implementation Phase

Medium to Long-Term: The medium to long-term implementation phase will be driven at the territorial level, through the TAPs developed and approved during the short to medium-term stage. Each TAP focuses geographically on a territory within a state, province, or region and emphasizes cross-border initiatives with the neighbouring territories covered by the RSS where relevant. Long-term implementation requires a minimal level of institutionalization of the RSS at the territorial level, which will be aligned to existing structures and capacity at the national level. This is critical to facilitate the scale and magnitude of territorial-level interventions and of cross-border coordination and cooperation required to achieve effectiveness.

The Implementation phase has been initiated with the support of the African Union especially in the development and elaboration of Regional Action Plan (RAP) and the development of methodology and approach for the TAPs.

Chapter 2

PROGRESS IN THE RSS INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Chapter 2

PROGRESS IN THE RSS INSTITUTIONALIZATION

This chapter analyses the progress made in advancing the extended inception stage through the process of institutionalization of the RSS. It explains the state of key inception processes, and it details specific outputs, including the development of the TAPs. The chapter concludes by identifying areas that require greater attention and highlights the way forward.

The RSS builds on the notion that a regional response to the type of crisis at issue must be institutionalized and must set standards for coordination and collaboration to optimize its effectiveness. That is, it is necessary to create structures that embody the vision and principle of a common response, one aligned with the main treaties and agreements on peace, security, and development on the African continent. Further and for the same reason, there must be permanent mechanisms that consolidate and systematize dialogue and coordination among the countries sharing borders around Lake Chad. Finally, the RSS also recognizes the need for alignment with existing political, technical, and administrative structures at all levels. This alignment will secure policy and programmatic coordination among HDP actors at both national and territorial level, while ensuring that identified specific capacity gaps are filled for achieving greater effect, avoiding redundancies, and catalysing joint action including mobilization of funds.

Building on efforts undertaken during the launch stage of the inception phase, which is covered in the RSS Inception Report, the

extended inception stage aims at consolidating the foundation of that institutional framework. During the reporting period, resources and efforts were provided to establish the RSS management structures at the regional level and to kick-start stabilization efforts at the territorial level. The foundation is now laid, and all stakeholders and partners should make use of this unique architecture that enables decision-making, coordination and cooperation in the LCB.

During 2020, good progress was made regarding the institutionalization of the RSS at the regional level (Table 1). The LCBC contains the core regional management structures, including: the Secretariat, the Steering Committee, the Regional Task Force with its Thematic Clusters, and the Governors' Forum, created in 2018. The LCBC and the AU Commission are now in a position to accelerate implementation of the Strategy's Nine Pillars. Some participative structures beyond the Secretariat, such as the civil society platform, have been launched and are being established at regional, national, and territorial levels. Others, such as the private sector investment platform and the interparliamentary forum, still need to be established.

2.1   RSS Secretariat

The RSS Secretariat is now fully operational, with staff working from its newly constructed offices within the premises of the LCBC. The current Secretariat staff is seconded by

TABLE 1

RSS institutionalization activities and progress since 2019

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Date	Activity
17 JULY 2019	The Official Launch of UNDP RSF as an interim funding mechanism for RSS Implementation
27 NOVEMBER 2019	Inaugural meeting of the RSS Steering Committee in N'Djamena, Chad, and presentation of the RSS Inception Report
16-17 JANUARY 2020	Workshop for the development of the Regional Action Plan 2020/21 held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
22 FEBRUARY 2020	Information and awareness-raising workshop for the LCBC staff on the RSS and the RSF. Finalization of the RSS Glossary
30 MARCH 2020	The LCBC and the AU Commission validate the Regional Action Plan 2020/21
29 APRIL 2020	First virtual meeting of the Regional Task Force officially established
12 JUNE 2020	Coordination meeting between RSS Secretariat and the AU Stabilization Team
AUGUST 2020	Revision of the Guidance Notes for the template for development of TAPs
19 AUGUST 2020	Virtual inauguration of the Thematic Clusters of the Regional Task Force in N'Djamena, Chad
SEPTEMBER 2020	Recruitment of RSS Secretariat staff completed
SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 2020	Eight Governors' Offices briefed on TAP process; follow-up meetings with seven offices with operational actors (pending: Borno); Pillar Working Groups established in five out of eight territories
NOVEMBER TO DECEMBER 2020	National CSO platform launches in the four countries of LCB (Nigeria 16 November, Chad 18 November, Niger 23 November, Cameroon November)
3 DECEMBER 2020	Regional CSO platform launch
4 DECEMBER 2020	Second virtual meeting of the Regional Task Force
8 TO 10 DECEMBER 2020	Meeting with the RSS focal points of the eight Governors' Offices in preparation for the third Governors Forum
DECEMBER 2020	Establishment of the LCBC CIMIC Cell

UNDP and funded through the RSF as well as by Norwegian Capacity (NORCAP).[8] In the longer term, it is expected that the LCBC will assume full responsibility for the staffing and operation of the Secretariat. Furthermore, secondment by other partners of the LCBC could contribute to enhancing its capacity for the RSS implementation. Capacity-building support includes plans for coaching new staff that are identified by the LCBC and AU COMMISSION.

The LCBC intends to conduct an organizational capacity assessment in 2021. The assessment will inform decisions by the LCBC Executive Secretary on the future composition of the Secretariat staff and other organizational capacity needs. The LCBC has already initiated a process of strengthening its business and financial processes by conducting a financial audit in late 2019. The outcome of the audit will support and complement outcomes from the assessment.

2.1.1 *The Regional Action Plan*

On 16 and 17 January 2020, the Secretariat held a technical workshop to elaborate a RAP for the years 2020-2021. It was attended by 55 representatives from the four Boko Haram-affected countries, the AU Commission, civil society, development partners and other experts. The workshop successfully resulted in the agreed RAP 2020-2021, which serves as the guiding document for coordination and cooperation at the regional level during the stated period. The RAP gives guidance to the management structures of the RSS and offers clear strategic direction for regional actions, including the need to advocate for more emphasis on cross-border activities and funding mechanisms, accelerating civil-military cooperation, and improving information-sharing, communication, and knowledge management.

2.2 RSS Governance Structure

The first meeting of the Steering Committee under the leadership of the LCBC and AUC as co-chairs, was held on 27 November 2019 in N'Djamena, Chad, establishing the mechanism for guidance at the political and strategic level to enable RSS implementation. As per its Terms of Reference, the Steering Committee serves as the overall strategic, political, policy, programme and decision-making mechanism, ensuring that the RSS achieves its Strategic Objectives and delivers results as intended. It is responsible for general oversight over the RSS activities and interventions, and it advises on priorities. The Steering Committee serves as the platform for review, decision-making, and strategic direction for the RSS, as well as a mechanism for joint mobilization. It provides quality assurance for the RSS implementation and reports to the LCBC Council of Ministers.

In its exchange with the MNJTF, the Steering Committee emphasized the need for enhanced non-kinetic operations in partnership with affected communities to win their hearts and minds and to promote the rehabilitation and reintegration of persons associated with Boko Haram. It endorsed the division of the nine RSS Pillar Working Groups into three Thematic Clusters and urged the LCBC to deepen its analysis on the provision of aid and external support to the affected territories. The Steering Committee welcomed the transformation of the Oslo Consultative Group on Prevention and Stabilization in the Lake Chad Region into the International Support Group (ISG) for the Regional Stabilization Strategy in the LCB as mandated by the RSS, and it approved full membership of two ISG representatives in the Steering Committee. In 2020, the second Steering Committee meeting was postponed due to COVID-19 preventive measures. It is expected that it will be held in mid-2021 in virtual modality.

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[8]   Some staff deployment was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting travel restrictions.

2.3 RSS Technical and Programmatic Coordination

2.3.1 The Regional Task Force

In 2020, under the guidance of the LCBC and AUC the Regional Task Force was established and mechanisms for its operationalization were developed, such as Clusters' meetings, distribution lists, and explanatory documents. The inaugural meeting of the Regional Task Force took place virtually on 29 April 2020 and was a major milestone for the institutionalization of the RSS. By facilitating partnerships, the Regional Task Force aims to increase its influence on the ground through better coordination and collaboration and to connect more efficiently and strategically with the partnership networks built around the TAPs and the territorial-level Pillar Working Groups (PWGs).

The Regional Task Force is composed of technical experts appointed by organizations and entities working in the field of stabilization, resilience, and recovery in at least two of the four affected LCBC countries. With this level

of expertise, the Regional Task Force is ideally positioned to support the technical coordination of the RSS and the Secretariat and drive the operationalization of the New Way of Working. By aggregating analysis and overseeing a common monitoring and evaluation framework, it will ensure much greater consistency and coherence across the RSS partners' workplans at the national and territorial level and the RAP 2020/2021.

The Regional Task Force is structured into three Thematic Clusters, which are aligned with the nine RSS Pillars. The Thematic Clusters are Governance (Pillars 1 and 5); Development and Humanitarian (Pillars 4,6 and 7); and Security and Protection (Pillars 2,3 and 8). Empowerment and Inclusion of Women and Youth is a cross-cutting Pillar.

On 19 August 2020, a virtual inauguration event of the Regional Task Force's Thematic Clusters was held by the LCBC and the AU Commission involving over 70 participants from 24 institutions and organizations. Participants agreed upon the lead and co-lead agency for each Cluster, confirmed their roles, expectations and working modalities, and agreed upon the next steps. The second meeting of the Regional Task Force took place on 4 December 2020, involving approximately 25 organizations, and it provided an opportunity to take stock of 2020 progress and identify priorities for 2021 (Figure 3).

2.3.2 The RSS Result Framework

The development of the RSS Results Framework, a key tool for tracking the implementation phase's progress, was completed during the reporting period. The development process also facilitated exchange and debate that fostered a common strategic vision, strengthened shared ownership of the Strategy, and enhanced accountability of key stakeholders.

FIGURE 3
Current Task Force Member Organizations according to Working Group

Creating the Results Framework was a highly consultative process that required the participation and buy-in of the many stakeholders who will need to use it. The first series of consultations involved the LCBC RSS Secretariat and the Regional Task Force members and resulted in an agreed methodology for developing the Framework in July 2020. The second round of consultation involved the AU Commission, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)'s information management personnel, the RSS Pillar Cluster members, UNDP's Heads of Stabilization in each country, and other entities such as the UNU Project on Managing Exits from Armed Conflict. Inputs during these consultations informed the draft Results Framework that was completed in September 2020.

Since October 2020, several virtual workshops have been held by the Regional Task Force's Pillar Clusters to review and validate the draft Framework. The Results Framework has been finalized, along with accompanying written guidance and tools for operationalization at the regional and territorial levels. Its dissemination to HDP actors is ongoing through the Office of the Resident Coordinators, the Offices of the Governors of the Boko Haram-affected territories within the relevant LCBC Member States, and other key partners. The Result Framework provides the frame for the development, and prioritization of key actions for each territory through the TAPs, it will guide the implementation, and monitoring of TAPs with clear measurable indicators that are aligned to the Nine Pillars and 40 Strategic Objectives. It also provided the frame for the review of the RAPs. As an example, the monitoring and evaluation framework of each TAP is expected to be aligned with the RSS Results Framework. The Secretariat continues to work with Governors' Offices to ensure the alignment between the Result Framework and the TAPs. The Secretariat is also developing a reporting guidelines and templates and will roll out a baseline analysis for the indicators.

2.3.3 The Territorial Action Plans and the Pillar Working Groups

The TAPs are at the heart of the Strategy's offer to the people living in the crisis-affected areas of the LCB. The rationale for the TAPs is that HDP actors working on stabilization, recovery and resilience support the Governors' Offices to develop practical plans, for the gradual transition from emergency humanitarian response to stabilization, early recovery, and development responses. They are the foundational building blocks for RSS localization and implementation. TAPs represent comprehensive sets of key interventions and actions for the next five years that align with the vision of the territory's future, expressed by the Governor's Offices. In addition, cross-border interventions that will advance the territory's stabilization and development goals are to be included by various Governors' Offices collaboratively.

Developing the TAPs is a very challenging process. To have effect, the TAPs must integrate the input of multiple stakeholders, notably CSO and local communities, to be truly based on demand and needs.

In 2020, the TAPs development process was very vulnerable to the onset of the pandemic and its concomitant restrictions. The Governors are leading this process, and there is need for in-depth exchanges and discussions to develop congruent visions and concepts that facilitate cross-border synergies among the territories. The Secretariat has held productive bilateral meetings with each Governor's Office, but these cannot compensate for in-person multilateral meetings among all those involved in the process of developing these TAPs. Existing workplans in the eight territories reflect some differences from established TAP priorities and there is a need for some adaptation and more deliberation to harmonize their approaches.

Nonetheless, the development of the TAPs continues. Each Governor's Office has appointed at least two TAP focal points. A regional

consultant and national consultants in each of the four countries have also been recruited to serve as essential support to the Secretariat in advancing the development of the TAPs. The consultants and focal points have engaged a large number of stakeholders with the support of the four UN Resident Coordinators' Offices, including organizations implementing activities in their territories. They have done so to ensure as broad a buy-in to the TAPs as possible. The stakeholders that have been consulted are encouraged to join territorial level PWGs that have been organized for the three Clusters, as at the regional level. The Governors' focal points lead the interaction with the PWGs.

The regional and national consultants have also held meetings with all eight Governors' Offices. To date, PWGs have been established in each of the eight territories: Diffa in Niger; Far North and North in Cameroon; Lac and Hadjer Lamis in Chad; and Borno, Yobe and Adamawa in Nigeria. Each of these eight territories is expected to finalize their TAP in mid-2021. The RSS Secretariat will provide quality control to ensure each TAP's alignment with the RSS Strategy, other policy documents, and the RSS Results Framework.

2.4 RSS Cross-Border Enablers

2.4.1 The Governors' Forum

The establishment of the Governors' Forum in 2018 constituted a major step towards the institutionalization of the RSS.[9] The second Forum meeting, held in 2019, highlighted its potential as a mechanism to address common threats and to leverage cross-border opportunities.[10] The third Forum meeting, scheduled for 2020, was postponed to the second quarter of 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The eight Governors, and their administrations, are in the unique position to drive the implementation of the RSS Strategic Objectives and the needed institutionalization and localization at the territorial level. The Strategy's architecture ties them into a broad network of partners that can catalyse operational efficacy and resource mobilization. They are at the intersection of territorial operations, cross-border coordination and cooperation, and partnerships. As the Strategy stresses:

In recognizing the unique position and interest of the governors of the subregion to facilitate and help lead the stabilization efforts, the governors of the states/regions around Lake Chad will become the principal custodians of the Strategy's implementation. Given this role, the Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum also becomes an important platform for sharing information, knowledge, and progress on implementation of the Strategy to promote context-specific best practices for stabilization in the subregion.[11]

The third Governors' Forum will be hosted by Cameroon in Yaoundé in 2021. Ahead of the Forum, the Secretariat has taken a series of preparatory actions. In November 2020, the Secretariat held a virtual consultation with representatives of the Governors. The virtual meeting led to the development of draft concept

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9   At the inaugural meeting in Maiduguri on 8-9 May 2018, eight 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 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. 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). See "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," 14 August 2018. https://reliefweb.int/ report/nigeria/ report-inaugural-meeting-lake-chad-basin-governors-forum-regional-cooperation

10 At the second meeting the Governors agreed amongst others to assume its role as primary mechanism for cross-border cooperation in the implementation of the RSS, to commit to the design and implementation of the TAPs. See "Second Meeting of the Lake Chad Basin Governor's Forum," Final Report.

11 The RSS, p. 26.

and agenda for the Forum. The November meeting was followed by a face-to-face meeting of all Governors' Representatives in December 2020 in N'djamena. The meeting agreed and validated the collective priorities of the Governors and agreed on key thematic issues for discussion at the Forum. The meeting also presented recommendations for strengthening RSS implementation at the territorial level. These included a dedicated monitoring, reporting and coordination capacity at the level of the Governors to support technical coordination among the PWG and to ensure data collection and reporting of progress on RSS implementation at the territorial levels. Other subsequent preparations to support the Forum are the development of dedicated Forum websites to enhance communication and access to background resources and the commissioning of background papers and a documentary for dedicated sessions at the Forum.

The third Governors Forum will review progress in the implementation of stabilization interventions and assess humanitarian and development situations, including civil-military and humanitarian cooperation in the region. The Forum will also explore new opportunities for practical cross-border interventions and cooperation, possibly including regional policy options for reconciliation and reintegration.

2.4.2 *The Civil Society Platform*

The RSS calls for a New Way of Working that recognizes the critical role of different stakeholders and the imperative for coordination among stakeholders at the local, national, and regional levels, as well as continental, including international partners, civil society actors and the private sector. To ensure local ownership, the RSS is designed and implemented at the local level with national and regional oversight through the TAPs.

TAPs are anchored on a Whole of Society approach that emphasizes the critical need for all stakeholders in the implementation of the RSS. The Strategy further recognizes that for effective and robust local and national ownership of the process and for legitimacy, the involvement and role of the CSO cannot be ignored. According to the Strategy, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations have a particularly significant role to play in the definition and implementing the TAPs. The RSS stresses the importance of actively engaging CSOs to close the disconnection "…often fed by real and perceived local disaffection and alienation from the State…[They] have local credibility in seeking to build community resilience against radicalisation."[12]

In 2020, NORCAP seconded a CSO Specialist to support the acceleration of the CSO component of the RSS. The AUC through its Citizens in Diaspora Organization (CIDO) directorate and the AU-ECOSOC also supported the roll-out of the CSO component by providing insights particularly on the development of the CSO database. The launch of the Regional Civil Society Platform took place on 3 December 2020, in the presence of approximately 80 participants.

The capacities created within the new RSS Secretariat allow the LCBC to go beyond merely facilitating participation. They can drive systematic engagement and capacity-building of CSOs to fulfil their essential regional role and contribute to the broader coordination, efficacy, and relevance of RSS efforts. In this vein, the newly conceived CSO engagement strategy is a major contribution and commitment to systematically strengthening civil society capacities. It will broaden existing civil society networks in the region, including at the territorial levels, and build their organizational capacities to contribute to the localization and implementation of the RSS.

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[12] The RSS, 51.

2.5 Strengthening Civil-Military Cooperation with the MNJTF

One of the central components of the RSS is the LCBC-MNJTF's Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) Cell. The objectives are interrelated: First, to ensure adequate civilian oversight of the CIMIC Cell and, second, to support MNJTF to better cooperate and coordinate with humanitarian actors operating in the region. The third objective is to strengthen weakened relationships between MNJTF and affected communities to improve communication, rebuild trust and ensure information-sharing between communities and MNJTF through appropriate and trusted information protocols. The overarching goal is to ensure planning, sequencing, and coordination of initiatives for extending humanitarian access, safe return of refugees, and secure opening of borders; all in support of human mobility, cross-border trade, and other relevant activities.

The recruitment of a Civil-Military Cooperation Adviser in October 2020 has improved overall coordination, oversight and support to MNJTF. From November to December 2020, the Secretariat has collaborated and consulted with several stakeholders to strengthen relationships and advance the CIMIC mandate forward. Progress made with the last two months of the year included the development, review and validation of the Terms of Reference for the LCBC-MNJTF CIMIC Cell and the development of Strategic Communication (StratComm) Strategy in collaboration with UNDP's Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) team.

The establishment of the Cell represents a major milestone in operationalization of the RSS. It has proven to be an effective means of building strong cooperation with MNJTF, including identification of capacity gaps, required to ensure better understanding of MNJTF role in the implementation of the Strategy. Specifically, the establishment of the Cell has also helped in strengthening civil oversight of the MNJTF CIMIC functions. The Cell also mobilized MNJTF collaboration in identifying key cross-border interventions in manner that prioritized security considerations in the identification process. For 2021, Cell attention will be focused on the following:

- **Enhance policy, advocacy, advice, and training on CIMIC**. The Cell will support the dissemination of generic guidelines on civil-military cooperation, advocate for more civilian involvement on security matters, and support training to MNJTF and relevant national security actors if needed.

- **Facilitate effective functioning of CIMIC network and cross-border cooperation.** The Cell will strengthen interactions among critical stakeholders, communities and CSOs to strengthen military-community relationship and information exchange.

- **Facilitate the implementation of the StratComm Civil-Military Action Plan on PVE**. Ensure multi-stakeholder involvement in the implementation of the StratComm.

- **Enhance cooperation and collaboration with humanitarian actors**. The Cell will facilitate, the development of LCBC-specific Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination Guidelines for humanitarian actors engagement with MNJTF and national security forces and facilitate the convening of Humanitarian-Security Dialogue in the LCB region in collaboration with humanitarian actors such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and UNHRC.

Chapter 3

PROGRESS ACROSS CLUSTERS

Chapter 3

PROGRESS ACROSS CLUSTERS

For effective coordination of interventions and technical support, the RSS Regional Task Force includes Thematic Clusters, aligned with Nine RSS Pillars of intervention and Forty Strategic Objectives (Annex B). The three Clusters are also designed to align with the UN Country Frameworks for Assistance, the AU Sahel Strategy and the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. The three Clusters are Governance, Development and Humanitarian, and Security and Protection. These three Clusters bring together the RSS Regional Task Force members to foster Humanitarian, Development and Peace nexus and promote a New Way of Working in the LCB region.

3.1   Governance Cluster Progress

The Governance Cluster includes Pillar 1 on political cooperation and Pillar 5 on governance and the social contract. UN Office for Central Africa, UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel and UNDP are co-leads of the Governance Cluster. During the reporting period, important progress was made in four main areas: Contributing to regional-level efforts (Pillar 1, objectives 1, 3 and 4); Harmonization of approaches (Pillar 1, objective 2); Cross-border initiatives (Pillar 5, objective 21); and good governance, rule of law and quality of services (Pillar 5, objectives 17, 18, 19 and 20). Significant opportunities exist for stakeholders to move from the current ad hoc nature of intervention delivery to a more coordinated and collaborative strategic approach that would enable more efficient and effective use of resources and expertise.

PILLAR 1
Strengthening Political Cooperation

To strengthen political cooperation, coherence, and complementarity among the LCB Member States towards the implementation of the RSS, the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and his counterpart for West Africa and the Sahel toured the LCB countries during the reporting period. They were accompanied by the Executive Director of UN Counter-Terrorism Committee and the European Union Special Representative for the Sahel to promote regional approaches to disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation, and reintegration (DDRR) and screening, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration (SPRR).[13] Furthermore, to enhance and improve intra- and inter-regional cooperation in support of the RSS, roadshows were held in Nigeria. This completed the RSS' national sensitisation and popularisation campaign which began in 2019 in Chad, Niger and Cameroon. Additional missions to further popularize the RSS and advance political engagement were held in Dakar, Senegal to mobilize West and Central African UN agencies, programmes, and funds. A further political mission to Ivory Coast provided an opportunity for the LCBC to engage the African Development Bank (AfDB). Overall, such RSS missions to AU/Economic Community Of the West African States/LCBC Member States and Regional Offices strengthened political cooperation with key national and regional political stakeholders and actors in both West and Central African region.

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[13]   SPRR and DDRR fall under Pillar 3 objectives 9 to 12. However, the harmonisation efforts fall under Pillar 1, objective 2.

PILLAR 5
Support to Governance and Social Contracts

UNDP is one of the main partners of the LCBC in the implementation of the RSS and is currently implementing stabilization interventions across the four countries of the Lake Chad through the RSF. UNDP RSF has supported governments and affected local authorities to strengthen social contracts; re-establish trust, law and order; open new channels for cross-border trade; and build infrastructure, such as cross-border roads, notably in the Nigeria and Cameroon border region. The Facility has improved safety for affected communities through the construction of security infrastructure and the training of security personnel. This has been achieved through its livelihood activities: the construction of over 1800 infrastructure components including water lines, shops, market stalls, housing, health facilities and schools. It also supports opening of new market opportunities and improved livelihoods benefiting from cross-border economic opportunities. A summary of the RSF annual report is Annexed.

3.2 Humanitarian and Development Cluster Progress

The Humanitarian and Development Cluster includes Pillar 4 on Humanitarian Assistance, Pillar 6 on Socioeconomic Recovery and Environmental Sustainability, and Pillar 7 on Education, Learning and Skills. The Cluster is co-led by the AU's Department of Social Affairs and UN Institute for Training and Research. The RSS Pillar 4 endorses humanitarian aid as one of its key principles, focusing on lifesaving response (objective 13), the voluntary, safe, and dignified return of internally displaced persons and refugees (objective 14), protection (objective 15), and psychosocial support (objective 16). The Strategy foresees a coordinated approach between humanitarian development and peace actors, who contribute primarily to Pillar 4, 6 and 7 of the Strategy.

All Regional Task Force members providing humanitarian assistance, recovery and stabilization support run integrated programmes that cover a broad range of activities addressing multiple Strategic Objectives of the RSS. For example, IOM's peacebuilding programme in Chad's Lac Province supports communities to develop sustainable livelihoods, includes support for vocational training through 17 cooperatives, and integrates conflict transformation approaches. World Food Programme works in Chad and Niger and has assisted over 700,000 returnees with immediate life-saving support and subsequent livelihood assistance, and in Nigeria 200,000 beneficiaries in the Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States. Plan International applies a similarly broad integrated approach in areas of the Far North, Cameroon; Diffa, Niger; and Borno, Nigeria.

These integrated programmes demonstrate the importance and realization of Whole of Society approaches. They require considerable coordination with multiple government and non-government stakeholders and can, through smart cooperation, develop effective synergies across programmes. The RSS architecture offers an important platform to increase visibility and support greater coordination of such efforts.

These become even more pressing as these integrated approaches are facing increased and multi-faceted challenges from COVID-19 on stabilization efforts.

PILLAR 4
Providing Humanitarian Assistance

Most of the actors operating in the LCB are assisting affected populations with basic lifesaving assistance including food and non-food items, clean water, health, and sanitation support. However, little data has been provided to the LCBC RSS Secretariat for inclusion in this report.

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix, an information management system, tracks displacement and population mobility, gathering

data in the LCB region that is invaluable for analysing displacement trends and informing decision-making regarding support to affected communities and for voluntary, safe and dignified return. It illustrates the value of a strong Knowledge Management Platform in ensuring that stabilization, recovery and development efforts are evidence-based and responsive to actual community needs.

The impact of trauma as an obstacle to community engagement and project implementation is often underestimated and inadequately addressed in programmes. The Strategy emphasizes its importance in its Strategic Objectives 15 and 16. The AU Commission is collaborating with the LCBC RSS Secretariat, IOM, and Deuthsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) to provide training designed to enhance the delivery of psychosocial support through local community practitioners and health personnel in the eight affected territories. Over the course of 2020, IOM's humanitarian programming in North-East Nigeria has reached nearly 1 million conflict-induced displaced populations and returnees needing psychosocial support. Living in camps, informal settlements and host communities in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States, the people receive direct mental health and psychosocial support services and activities through Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Resource Centres/Safe Spaces and the deployment of dedicated MHPSS mobile teams, mental health referral teams, community animators, and psychiatric nurses. Other organizations, such as Plan International, integrate psychosocial support into many of their projects.

Stabilization, recovery, and development efforts could benefit from a more systematic and integrated programming approach towards addressing the trauma experienced, and continuing to be experienced, by many members of the target communities, including not only victims of violent extremism but also security forces and other affected persons.

PILLAR 6
Promoting Recovery and Sustainability

Many initiatives in the region support sustainable livelihoods. The UNDP RSF, as an example, is investing in basic infrastructure and essential services, and supporting the improvement of livelihood opportunities, for most affected and vulnerable groups in the affected communities across the LCB region. In this sense, the activities implemented through the UNDP RSF are improving access to hard-to-reach areas and preparing the ground for recovery and sustainability. Across the four countries, supports that focus on women and youth are helping to launch communities towards new market opportunities, improving access to livelihood options, restoring trust between communities and government – thereby re-establishing lapsed social contract bonds.

For many decades, weak and inadequate infrastructure investment for regional economic integration characterized the eight affected territories, and that failure is rectified under the RSS. Mobility in the region is very poor for both people and goods, hampering investments, inflating transportation costs and perpetuating poverty and conflict. While many Regional Task Force members invest in building local infrastructure, there is a need for large scale investments, including in infrastructure systems. The AfDB Lake Chad Basin Regional Road Network Integration Project, for example, includes the construction of a bridge over the Logone River between Yagoua, Cameroon and Bongor, Chad. Initiatives such as this are important for boosting trade and promoting regional economic integration. There is a need for more investment to improve road and economic infrastructure connecting the four countries and to open access for isolated communities.

Another focus for cross-border efforts combines environmental protection and livelihood opportunities. The effects of

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climate change are not limited by borders. Environmental protection initiatives have more success when they are comprehensive and coherent rather than territorially confined. The AfDB's Programme to Rehabilitate and Strengthen the Resilience of Socio-Ecological Systems in the Lake Chad Basin aims at improving the living conditions of communities most affected by insecurity and climatic hazards.[14] The project, which contributes to Pillar 6 and Strategic Objectives 22, 23 and 25, focuses on social and economic reintegration by building the target population's climate change resilience and adaptation capacity, increasing their incomes, and raising awareness on environmental protection. It provides a common funding instrument to target communities across border areas.

3.3 Security and Protection Cluster Progress

The Security and Protection Cluster includes Pillar 2 on Security and Human Rights, Pillar 3 on DDRR and Pillar 8 on Prevention of Violent Extremism and Building Peace. Many initiatives related to security and protection also contribute to the Governance Cluster's Pillar 5 Strategic Objectives and are mentioned above. Institute for Security Studies, IOM, UNHCR and UNODC are co-leads for this Cluster. This section draws attention to human rights promotion and management of vigilantes (Pillar 2, objective 8), notably in the context of SPRR and DDRR (Pillars 2 and 3, objectives 7 and 9 to 12), and on preventing violent extremism (Pillar 8); and contributions to Pillar 2, objective 5, on enhancing MNJTF Operations.

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[14]   While the funds contribute primarily to Pillar 6, as a funding instrument it promotes objective 21,

PILLAR 2
Promoting Security and Human Rights

The initiatives supporting the MNJTF that contribute to Pillar 2, objective 5, can be divided into three types. First, the AU Commission offers technical support to strengthen the MNJTF's capacity to respond to the operational needs of humanitarian and stabilization actors. Second, technical training and capacity-building to MNJTF officers on issues such as the protection of women and girls during military operations, provided by UNWOMEN, and rule of law, human rights, and the handling of Boko Haram affiliated persons, provided by UNODC, support the realization of this objective. Third, UNDP's regional PVE project[15] and the Okapi's Radio Ndarason Internationale has developed a strategy for counter-messaging that focuses on strengthening community-military relationships in the region.

Since October 2015, the AU and its partners, especially the European Union (EU), have continued to provide additional financial and logistic support to the MNJTF that is aligned to the MNJTF stated requirements and within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding and Support Implementation Agreement signed between the AU, LCBC and MNJTF Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs). The EU continues to provide support to the MNJTF through the AU using the African Peace Facility. It is pertinent to note that Phase One of EU-AU support to MNJTF amounting to Euros 45 million ended in December 2020. The EU has availed Euros 20 million through the AU, and Euros 40 million directly managed by EU, to continue supporting the MNJTF in a Phase Two running from January to December 2021.

The EU-AU additional support to the MNJTF in phase II include, the Air Mobility service (comprised of 3 helicopters for logistics/personnel movement and casualty evacuation), Level III medical services, Fuel to Sectors, Command-Control-Communication and Information System (C3IS) service, Mission Subsistence Allowance (MSA) for the HQ MNJTF Staff Officers, salaries to civilian staff supporting the MNJTF, and HQ MNJTF operating costs that allow the HQ to effectively plan, coordinate and sustain military operations in line with the tasks set to it by the Concept of Operations. The EU-AU support to the MNJTF also includes the Mission Support Teams comprising of: the Strategic Support Cell at the AUC (4 staff) and the Civilian Component (11 staff) at the MNJTF HQs.

With the establishment of the CIMIC Cell, support to the MNJTF will need to address more strategic questions. UNITAR is planning to build the capacities of MNJTF and the Cell to promote joint planning with law enforcement. In the RSS, the critical linkage between the military and the HDP nexus is the issue of sequencing. This raises a wide range of questions: What does the interface between military and civilian efforts look like at a strategic and tactical level? What conditions must be met for security and police forces to step into a space previously held by the military? Moving forward, it will be important to prioritize multi-stakeholder discussions and strategic and tactical agreements around the issue of sequencing.

Further, Boko Harams' activities have spurred the formation and growth of different forms of informal community self-defence groups. Many of these groups, such as the Civilian Joint Task Force in Nigeria, have supported military forces in their operations against Boko Haram. In Cameroon and Chad, decrees were issued to register and regulate so-called *comités de vigilance* (watchmen committees in English). Nonetheless, these watchmen committees have in many instances failed to register with authorities and have gone beyond self-defence and surveillance roles. The operation of these self-help groups and vigilantes comes with human rights-associated risks, as well as wider implications, for the communities they protect.

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[15] This activity targets several objectives at the same time, including objectives under Pillar 8.

Their activities have the potential to attract the wrath of Boko Haram factions against the communities they protect.

DDRR efforts aimed at these groups require first and foremost a detailed mapping and analysis of the relevant situations, and the issuance of regulations on community safety and the role that community watch groups can play in it furthering this goal. In Cameroon, UNDP has conducted a series of studies and papers on watchmen committees in an effort to help the authorities develop their approach to vetting and registering watchmen and integrating them in community safety plans and local early-warning systems. The RSS Secretariat has also commissioned a regional study aimed at developing standards and guideline for the operations of the vigilantes, as well as a process for their possible reintegration and reabsorption into communities and security agencies across the four affected countries.

PILLAR 3
DDRR and SPRR

The Regional Task Force members and other organizations realize the importance of human rights protection and respect for the rule of law in SPRR processes. Human rights abuses, lack of due process and indefinite detention are some of the major drivers of radicalization. The absence of a fair and transparent process for screening and prosecuting Boko Haram associates can alienate communities from security forces and the justice system.

A UNODC/UN Counter-Terrorism Committee's Executive Directorate-UN Office of Counter-Terrorism regional SPRR project is assessing current standards, identifying good practices and lessons learned from other regions, and working with officials from the four riparian countries to identify ways of implementing common SPRR standards, in compliance with international requirements. In 2019, these organizations embarked on a joint mission to the LCB region that promoted the development of a regional community-based SPRR policy. This resulted in a joint effort to develop a community-based reconciliation and reintegration Policy on SPRR in the LCB region. In addition, UNDP is working to empower regional, national and community-based CSOs to standardize SPRR practices and activities into implementable models through regional cooperation, knowledge exchange, and mutual learning of CSO engaged in SPRR. The new initiatives aimed to identify and amplify African-led solutions to resolve localized challenges that obstruct SPRR processes.[16]

A number of organizations are supporting justice and security agencies to strengthen respect for human rights in cases involving associates of Boko Haram. In Far North, Cameroon, the UNDP RSF works with the prosecutor's office in training the judicial police.[17] One major challenge the project faced is the competing jurisdiction of the military justice system to handle cases of persons related to terrorism. IOM in Niger supported the implementation of Niger's "National Programme for the Handling and Treatment of Former Associates of Boko Haram" by providing training and capacity-building to government entities involved in the process, including at the Goudoumaria rehabilitation centre. IOM provides similar training, to the Chadian Police Judiciaire and the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs. Other organizations seek to increase the oversight and accountability of security providers and local authorities by supporting human rights monitoring systems. The Human Rights Observatory in Cameroon's Far North, for example, was established by The Human Security Network and local CSOs, in partnership with the University of Maroua.

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[16] The network will conduct, starting from 2021, continuous knowledge exchanges on existing good practices and lessons learned in the field. It will advocate for whole-of-society informed SPRR-approaches to enhance the feasibility and legitimacy of national reintegration policies through inclusive design, but also to enable for improved protection of CSO frontline actors.

[17] Contributing to Pillar 2, objective 8, and Pillar 5, objectives 18 and 19.

Regional Task Force members such as IOM support governments to develop and implement a broader legal, institutional, and operational DDRR framework. The LCB also faces security challenges stemming from the surge in attacks by non-state armed groups. Although Boko Haram's presence has overshadowed the activities of armed criminal groups, they remain a major threat to community safety.

PILLAR 8
Preventing Violent Extremism and Building Peace

Many implementing partners have integrated PVE elements in their initiatives and interventions. A UNESCO initiative in the LCB region focuses on developing transformative educational tools for PVE and is training teachers. In Nigeria, for example, UNODC introduced a PVE training-of-trainers project for law enforcement officers, focusing on community-oriented policing. UNDP has provided support to the Government of Cameroon in developing a national PVE strategy and supported the Governments of Nigeria and Chad with the implementation of their national PVE strategies and action plans. Institute for Security Studies conducted research and comparative analysis on radicalization and violent extremism; they actively engaged and shared their analysis with local, national, and regional entities and networks.[18]

Given the multitude of initiatives under way, there is a real risk of overlap and redundancies of efforts. The RSS architecture provides opportunity for coordinated efforts, synchronization of activities and harmonized approaches by implementing partners working across the four riparian states.

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[18] This contributes to both Pillar 8 and Pillar 9, objective 40.

Chapter 4

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Chapter 4
CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

4.1   Empowerment of Women and Youth

Pillar 9 of the RSS includes cross-cutting Strategic Objectives aiming at the empowerment and inclusion of women and youth. This covers protection of women and girls from all forms of violence, exploitation, and abuse (objective 37); promotion of empowerment and socioeconomic rights (objective 38); engagement of youth in structured dialogues (objective 39); and monitoring and accountability for initiatives to ensure gender- and youth-sensitive approaches (objective 40).

The vast majority of initiatives reported they systematically targeted women and youth, or at least promoted their participation (Annex B). Humanitarian assistance systematically integrates women and youth perspectives in their programming. Livelihood and early recovery programmes specifically focus on youth and women. Women and youth play a prominent role in many organizations' conflict mediation and peacebuilding initiatives. UNWOMEN, UNDP, UN Children's Emergency Fund and others conducted training for women and youth as conflict mediators.[19] CMI Maarti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation and the AU RSS team are launching the AU Femwise Initiative, a mediation capacity-building programme for women. The AU Commission supports the engagement of the

youth in structured dialogues through its Youth for Peace Programme and is building a vast Youth Network for the region.[20]

In Nigeria, UNODC is building the capacities of women working in the justice sector, in partnership with the National Association of Women Judges, and enabling women judges to advance access to justice for affected population in the region. Such initiatives contribute to multiple Strategic Objectives, such as strengthening the rule of law (objective 19) and the provision of public services (objective 18), as well as promoting the role of women in public service and in positions of authority (objective 38). For the successful implementation of the Strategy, and in line with UNSC Resolution 1325, more initiatives should focus on ensuring institutional strengthening initiatives, such as law enforcement, include the empowerment of women and youth to both work with, and within, these institutions.

As a central component of its regional programme, IOM is conducting research at the regional level to better understand how gender affects the needs and expectations of communities, government actors, and persons who have disengaged from Boko Haram. This will inform recommendations for the development and implementation of gender-sensitive and gender-responsive DDRR policies and programmes.

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[19] Contribution to objectives 28, 39 and 40.

[20] Contribution to objectives 38 and 39.

Chapter 5

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATION

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Chapter 5

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATION

The regional and cross-border nature of the RSS required extraordinary amounts of cooperation, collaboration, and coordination – among multiple stakeholders in multiple sectors and across four countries and eight territories – even to get to the present point in its progress. Building an effective and robust coordination mechanism, one that brings together different partners at both political and technical levels and across regional, national, and territorial levels, has been an immense challenge.

5.1 Challenges

Political Framework: The political systems within the four countries differ, with Nigeria having a distinctively different political system than Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. In Nigeria, Governors of the affected territories are elected and enjoy a constitutionally mandated tenure with significant executive power for four years, unless impeached in the meantime. However, Governors of the affected territories in Cameroon, Chad, and Niger are civil servants who are appointed by the Presidents of the relevant countries. The variation in the political system and levels of independent authority and power, especially in the cases of the three Francophone countries in the region, has affected political engagement with some Governors' Offices due to high turn-over in their ranks. Another related challenge involves political configurations in Cameroon and Niger with establishment of regional councils that coordinate various territories under their remit. In some cases, this extends to a lack of clarity in Cameroon and Niger on the mandate of these regional councils with regard to RSS coordination and implementation at the local level.

Coordination: Through the RSS, the LCBC has established strong working relationships with various partners, aided by the operation of the RSS Regional Task Force. There is strong interest from many partners (UN and non-UN) to collaborate with the LCBC within the Framework of RSS. However, some have expressed the need for partners' expectations to be better articulated and communicated by the LCBC to ensure consistency in understanding of each partner's role in the RSS coordination structure. At the regional level, coordination is more institutionalized, with the huge presence of UN entities and limited involvement of NGOs, the private sector, and academia. The need to strengthen coordination with non-UN entities is critical in the interest of greater inclusion and the ownership of RSS by regional and local institutions. Nevertheless, coordination and sharing of information among actors under the Development and Humanitarian Cluster has proved difficult, with lack of meaningful support and engagement from members of that Cluster. The success of the RSS hugely depends on support from the partners of the LCBC Member States, and humanitarian and development actors represent a big percentage of this cohort.

Institutionalization: Institutionalizing a regional response at all levels is not a simple or straightforward process, as the multiple structures and mechanisms of the RSS demonstrate in efforts to ensure a harmonized approach for various security, humanitarian, stabilization, and development stakeholders to coordinate their efforts. Success has been reported on the establishment of the RSS

management structures and regional enablers at regional levels including: the Secretariat, the Steering Committee, the Regional Task Force with its Thematic Clusters, the CIMIC Cell, CSO platform and the Governors' Forum. However, stabilization efforts at the territorial level have faced various institutionalization challenges. As well, and importantly, the LCBC Parliamentary Forum is yet to be established. The lack of clarity on the inceptual configuration, funding and relationship with UNDP, together with the role of other HDP actors, pose a continuing challenge to the institutionalization of the RSS. The role of the Secretariat in facilitating RSS is embedded within this broader challenge.

While HDP actors align with the overall objectives of the Strategy at the territorial level, there is a continuation of the traditionally siloed operational approach by most agencies. Breaking this siloed approach among HDP actors is a challenge. This has hindered the TAPs development process. Another challenge that has affected RSS implementation is the communication gap between HDP actors at the regional, national, and territorial levels. Information shared by RSS Secretariat at the regional level is not regularly passed down to counterparts at the national and territorial levels.

COVID-19 Outbreak: In 2019 and 2020, Africa and the world faced the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to restrictions in the mobility of persons and populations across the region. The COVID-19 pandemic, and many of the measures put in place to contain it, also obstructed and hindered economic activities across the region, leading to the closure of schools and other essential services, among other restrictive measures. Four Situation Briefs have been jointly produced by UNDP, the LCBC and the AU. They trace and analyse COVID-19 evolution and response strategies in the LCB territories of Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria and provide initial rapid analysis and assessment of its implications for priority themes of the RSS.

In consequence, the COVID-19 outbreak and its containment measures stalled progress in the implementation of the RSS at all levels. The capacity of the Secretariat was significantly curtailed by the outbreak, which hindered quick recruitment of persons with the needed capacities. It stalled engagement with key stakeholders at both regional, national, and territorial levels, thereby inhibiting the speed at which stakeholders are able to understand their key responsibilities and requirements and engage effectively with the RSS. The measures imposed also slowed down cross-border engagement between the Secretariat and the various offices of the territorial Governors, especially with regards to the development of the TAPs. Most of the implementing partners working on the screening, prosecution and reintegration process in the region as also noted that the COVID-19 outbreak considerably slowed down their work, resulting in increases in the delays in courts, rehabilitation, and detention centres.

Security: LCBC States continue to experience violent activities from Boko Haram factions mainly from Boko Haram-Jamā'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihād (JAS) and Islamic State's West Africa Province.Thus, the security situation in the region remains volatile and has considerably restricted access to various locations around the Lake Chad Basin region. The unpredictability of the security situation also makes it difficult for humanitarian actors to access and deliver humanitarian assistance in certain locations. In many instances, sporadic and unpredictable attacks by Boko Haram factions have stalled progress among implementing partners. The volatile nature of the security situation in the LCB region has in most cases imposed high costs on implementation and, consequently, on the attainment of RSS goals. Risks for RSS initiatives have increased and access to the population and beneficiaries has become increasingly difficult for the RSS' implementing partners.

Operational: The critical need for a fit-for-purpose operational support system for RSS

work, aligned more closely to the pace of the emergency at hand, has become a major challenge. Institutional processes are sometimes slow and, in some cases, interfere with the smooth and speedy delivery and implementation of activities.

Information Management, Monitoring and Reporting: The first challenge is around accountability and the question of whether contributing information on an initiative, policy, indicator of the Results Framework makes a partner accountable for results and reporting in that area. Partners, including members of the Regional Task Force, have underscored the difficulty in providing timely reporting, which could become a burden added to their mandated responsibilities. Another considerable challenge is posed by the fact that many initiatives are happening and being implemented, but information does not necessarily generate or reach the Governors' Offices or the Secretariat, for appropriate monitoring and reporting. On the technical/tactical side, the scale of the RSS also poses a challenge for information management, monitoring and reporting. Finally, the period in which the Secretariat developed the Results Framework and this Report, from June to December 2020, was marked by a host of challenges relating to COVID-19, including the inability to hold in-person meetings and difficulties engaging at the local level for monitoring purposes.

5.2 Lessons

*Need for Political Dialogue
on the Role of the Different Levels
of Government in the LCB Region*

The varied political systems in the four countries, and the layers of political responsibilities and authorities often involved, present unique challenges for political engagement and buy-in towards regional cooperation and coordination for the attainment of RSS goals. One of the crucial lessons from

the process of developing the TAPs is the need for regular and sustained political engagement with the relevant stakeholders and authorities. Given the nature of the appointee system in the three French speaking countries in the LCB region, the identity of who to engage with is not always clear. In this regard, the need for expert dialogue and discussion on how the different systems in the LCB can support stabilization is imperative. The ISG that emerged from the Oslo Consultative Group on Prevention and Stabilization in the Lake Chad Region to support the RSS could be influential in lobbying for improved engagement. The ISG's mandate suits its representation on behalf of the RSS with the various governments, UN, and non-UN entities at the national level across the four countries including budgetary allocation towards stabilization interventions.

The Critical Need for Cross-Border Interventions

While the operationalization of the RSS at the territorial level envisaged an individual plan for each territory, collaborative action across the region and among territories is also required. Various attacks, including kidnappings and disruption of HDP projects, are a major obstacle to cross-border interactions. At the same time, cross-border trade and other beneficial interactions are critical to building interregional cooperation and improvements in community livelihoods – especially for those in the border areas. These positive cross-border interventions serve multiple political and socioeconomic roles. Such engagement will also likely yield long-lasting mutual benefits, such as security posts, improved road and bridge infrastructure, water management projects, and border markets. These projects and benefits then strengthen continuing cross-border trade in formal and informal channels, as well as community mutual interests that build resilience against further attacks. Together they will also help ensure the more sustained engagement of national and territorial level actors in the RSS.

Imperative for Civil-Military Cooperation

The process of establishing the CIMIC Cell through broad consultations with MNJTF and the AU brought a positive dynamic and a progressive approach to ensuring civilian oversight of the MNJTF activities including its relationships with communities and support for human rights. Continuous engagement with the MNJTF HQ and each country's Task Force sector office ensures streamlined coordination between stabilization actors and security forces in achieving the overall stabilization objective and the counter-insurgency fight against Boko Haram. The StratComm Strategy, articulated with the support of UNDP's Preventing Violent Extremism team, has paved the way for a more purposeful and effective engagement of civilians and communities in the global fight against Boko Haram.

*Need to Accelerate the Launching of
the RSS Knowledge Management Platform*

Communication and knowledge management are at the heart of RSS implementation, especially because of its boundary-breaking yet unifying potential. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates that we should develop new approaches for efficient communication and for designing or adapting tools for the local populations' needs. Providing support to the different programmes for better leadership in 2020 – TAPs, CIMIC Cell, CSO consultations, Regional Task Forces, and LCBC visibility – was the first step. The launching of the RSS Knowledge Management Platform is critical for the future of RSS and for the coordination of practitioners, resources, data and knowledge management and information-sharing.

5.3 Recommendations

1. **Role of the Resident Coordinators**
   To a large extent, the overall success of the RSS depends on the deepening and strengthening of coordination and collaboration among HDP actors to foster a nexus approach and support a New Way of Working in the implementation of LCB RSS. A recognition, definition, and provision of support to the role of the Resident Coordinators in coordinating the various HDP actors is critical for the success of RSS and for the overall alignment of interventions being made or to be made by actors to the TAPs. It is recommended that Resident Coordinator Offices take leadership not just in coordination, but also in engagement with key national entities and relevant line ministries, to ensure national level engagement towards institutionalization of the RSS. The role of the Resident Coordinator Offices, especially in the de-linking of the RSS and RSF, is critical to clarifying the entrenched perception that the RSS is synonymous to, or in tandem with, UNDP's current stabilization agenda. This will help ensure greater HDP actors' commitment to the RSS. The UN Development Coordination Office can play a great role in ensuring the same level of engagement and support across the four LCB region countries and the facilitation of regular communication among UN and non-UN entities through the Office of the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator.

2. **RSS Steering Committee**
   Stabilization is largely a political process and requires regular political interaction and engagement to sustain momentum and build on successes. However, the varied political systems in the four countries with layers of political responsibility and authority present unique political challenges that requires the political intervention of the Steering Committee. A Joint Mission of the Steering Committee is therefore recommended to build political momentum and to advocate for political stability in the RSS territories. In addition, the number of RSS Steering Committee members should be expanded to include relevant line ministries responsible for stabilization intervention at national level, which should foster coherence among actions at national and regional levels. It is also recommended for the ISG to use its political leverage at the national level and lobby for greater coordination and attention to RSS at the national level.

3. **Regional Task Force Coordination with National Actors**
   Technical coordination and communication are central for information-sharing, consistent understanding, and effective overall visioning of the RSS from the regional through the national to the territorial level. It is recommended that the members of the Regional Task Force make effort to enhance communication between the regional and the national and territorial levels. For stabilization actors to cooperate and coordinate, it is essential for information to flow across the three tiers of the political structures of the four affected countries, through the Task Forces to the PWGs, and vice versa. Smoother, and thus more effective, information flow and communication would facilitate engagement at the regional and territorial levels, enhance understanding of RSS, and increase local participation in the PWG towards the effective implementation of the TAPs. As an example, members of the Regional Task Force and PWGs need to enhance cooperation with the RSS Secretariat and the Governors' Offices to best use information and to enable accurate monitoring and reporting. In this view, additional and/ or enhanced dedicated capacities at the Governors' Offices would ensure regular and harmonized reporting, without overburdening partners and stakeholders.

4. **RSS CSO Platform As Entry Point for CSO Engagement**
   To strengthen the coordination capacities of RSS-relevant civil society activities, the territorial CSO platforms must be the gateways for any RSS activity involving civil society within any of the eight territories of the LCB region. This approach will make these civil society platforms more efficient and will increase their capacities in terms of coordination. A similar recommendation is made to all formal RSS partners, the implementation of whose activities requires the involvement of civil society at the territorial level. It is recommended that these RSS partners systematically work through the CSO platforms that are already in place in the territories and region. With a great presence in the territory and as members of PWGs, CSO platforms can also engage in data-collection processes in support of the monitoring and evaluation mechanism and facilitate information management.

5. **RSS Coordination Structure**
   A revision of RSS coordination and decision-making mechanisms is required to simplify its complex structure, as well as to ensure that the national ministries relevant for the implementation of RSS are part of the RSS decision-making structure. Secondly, it is recommended that the ISG and the international community continue to advocate for greater national and international attention on stabilization, recovery, and resilience in the relevant LCB territories. Expectations of a New Way of Working imply a New Way of Financing to ensure the stronger alignment of stabilization, recovery, and resilience initiatives in the LCB region to RSS frameworks. Such advocacy by ISG could also foster joint effort, coordination, and collaboration by implementing partners. It is recommended that the Steering Committee send a strong message to partners, to ensure meaningful cooperation, collaboration, and coordination through the existing mechanisms established by the LCBC RSS.

In recognition of the challenges faced by humanitarian actors, a dedicated session –Humanitarian Development and Security Dialogue for LCBC – should be organized through the most appropriate venue with relevant humanitarian, development and security actors, to assess the challenges they confront in their engagements in the region, support stabilization, and propose a way forward that alleviates the burdens imposed by those challenges.

6. **Funding of RSS Interventions**
   Led by UNDP, significant progress has been made through the immediate stabilization effort in the LCB region, including the strengthening of social contracts, the restoration of the rule of law, and improvements of livelihood opportunities for women and youths. However, UNDP's efforts in this regard do not respond to all the Nine Pillars and Forty Strategic Objectives. Therefore, the success of the RSS depends largely on the effective engagement of other HDP actors and the alignment of their interventions with RSS Pillars, Strategic Objectives and Frameworks. It is recommended that the Steering Committee decides on the most appropriate channels for the funding of the RSS, in a way that contributes to aid effectiveness, coherence and consistency. As well, the choice should build upon the great amount of effort and resources that have been devoted to creating coordination mechanisms and tools, while also expanding the ranks of implementing actors across the HDP spectrum.

7. **The Governors' Offices**
   The RSS is premised on a New Way of Working, through the Whole of Society approach, that connects regional challenges and solutions to the communities. It brings communities back to the centre of the solution, under the leadership of the Governors, and provides a framework for regional and cross-border cooperation,

which is essential to tackle the crisis in the LCB region. Governors are therefore at the centre of RSS implementation as well as the management of related information, monitoring and reporting. As such, it is recommended that the RSS Secretariat and Governors' Offices work even more closely towards the greater institutionalization of the RSS implementation within the Governors Offices so as to ensure better understanding of RSS and an even more coordinated approach for the implementation of the TAPs. It is also recommended that rapidly building and/or improving dedicated RSS Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity in each of the relevant Governors Offices, as well as the regional Secretariat, is critical to RSS operationalization and information management. Minimum reporting standards will need to be ensured for quality and timely account of RSS implementation and provision of information for decision-making.

8. **LCBC Long-Term Capacity for Stabilization** Capacity-building through the transfer of technical expertise on stabilization for longer-term operations by LCBC is also critical. It is expected that the LCBC will eventually assume full responsibility for the staffing and operation of the RSS Secretariat. All partners of the LCBC are recommended to consider seconding staff, for short/medium/longer term periods for enhancing understanding of the RSS and providing expertise in support to it. Capacity-building support must be prioritized, including the development and implementation of plans for dedicated LCBC recruited staff to routinely work alongside the current Secretariat staff for coaching and capacity transfer. As a first step, stabilization focal persons must be identified by the LCBC to shadow RSS Secretariat processes in 2021 for knowledge transfer and enhanced institutional memory. In addition, the proposed capacity assessment should include an exit plan from external support, with a dedicated plan for its effective implementation.

ANNEXES

Annex A

METHODOLOGY

Three different means of data collection were utilised: a desk review of documentation provided by the RSS Secretariat, semi-structured interviews with RSS Secretariat staff, and a questionnaire administered to all RSS Regional Task Force members as implementers of initiatives in the LCB region.

The desk research comprised a review of all the documents produced or received by the Secretariat up until December 2020, including the Strategy, project documents and reports, terms of references, concept notes, and outcome documents of RSS meetings, workshops and conferences.

Semi-structured interviews focusing on activities, milestones, challenges and lessons learnt were conducted with Secretariat staff:

1. Chika Charles Aniekwe, Head of Stabilisation, RSS Secretariat

2. Philip Attuquayefio, Phd, AUC, AU RSS Team

3. Pierre Bengono, Capacity Building Specialist, RSS Secretariat

4. Sara Bottin, Programme and M&E Specialist, RSS Secretariat

5. Peter Orr, International Consultant TAPs

6. Lillie Ris, International Consultant Results Framework

7. Adam Obatoki, Civil-military Cooperation Advisor, RSS Secretariat

8. Shereen Dbouk, Civil-Society Organisation Advisor, RSS Secretariat

A questionnaire was disseminated to over 20 entities that are members of the RSS Regional Task Force and sought to capture as wide a range of RSS-related initiatives as possible. Many organisations became aware of the scope of the RSS during 2020 – through, for example, a series of roadshow events – and therefore it may be too soon for them to have fully aligned their current work to the pillars and structures of the RSS. In this view, the questionnaire was designed to help organisations to identify the initiatives that are contributing to the RSS without necessarily being conceptualised with the RSS in mind.

Data quality

The progress report relies heavily on the data and information made available to the RSS Secretariat by the various Regional Task Force members and other stakeholders. Unfortunately, some questionnaire recipients did not provide responses by the time of finalisation of this report and therefore the data presented may be incomplete. Further, there were significant variations across the completed questionnaires in terms of quality and quantity of responses. The uneven distribution impacted the depth of analysis that was possible, and risks that there has been underreporting on some themes and overreporting on others. For example, very few organisations reported providing humanitarian assistance. While it is probable that there is a serious gap in this field, it might be more accentuated in this report by the lack of information provided.

The questionnaire could be reused for future progress reports with some modifications in terms of process and format, building on

lessons taken from this current exercise. For example, questionnaire respondents require sufficient time to complete the questionnaire. Very few organisations managed to return the questionnaire within the initial deadline. The format of the questionnaire could also be adapted to make it easier for respondents to reference the same initiatives reported under multiple questions.

Analysis

The analysis presented in this report is based on the Strategy's vision, mission, principles and concepts, including:

- "Winning hearts and minds" trust between communities, governments and security providers
- "The New Way of Working"
- Do no Harm
- A whole-of-society approach
- The Rule of Law and the Primacy of Human rights
- A Focus on Children, Youth & Women
- Environmental Sustainability
- International Humanitarian Principles

Questionnaire Overview

PART 1 **How has your organization contributed to the institutionalization of the RSS in 2020?**	Y	N
1 Do your activities directly or indirectly support cooperation, coherence and complementarity in stabilization, recovery and resilience among the LCBC Member States? For example, by: • Supporting LCBC Member States to adopt governance norms, principles and best practices? • Directly or indirectly supporting National Governments, the Governors' Forum, the CSO Platform, and the Inter-Parliamentary Forum in these efforts? • Contributing to enhancing and improving intra- and inter-regional cooperation for Peace, Security and Development in the LCB region?	☐ If yes, click here	☐
2 Do your activities directly or indirectly contribute to enhancing the capacities of the LCBC Secretariat and/or the African Union Commission?	☐ If yes, click here	☐
3 Do any of your activities address the capacities of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)? (This includes civil-military coordination and relations)	☐ If yes, click here	☐

		Y	N
4	Have any of your activities provided direct or indirect support to sub-regional governance structures and processes to promote effective management of border and transboundary issues? (This can include border management conflict resolution, natural resource management, etc.)	☐ If yes, click here	☐
5	Does your organization promote and actively foster a "New Way of Working" in the Lake Chad Basin Region through broader partnerships among UN agencies, international and local NGOs, private sector, civil society actors and government? Notably does your organization pool and combine data, analyse and share information?	☐ If yes, click here	☐

PART 2

What activities of your organization supported cross-cutting strategic objectives of the RSS in 2020?

		Y	N
6	Has your organization conducted localized conflict analysis to inform the development of your action plans and activities? And have you shared any data or products from this conflict analysis with other organizations nationally, or in the LCB region, notably with the regional bodies, the LCBC, its Steering Committee, or the Regional Task Force?	☐ If yes, click here	☐
7	Are your activities specifically aiming at restoring and strengthening state authority and building capacities of institutions to improve the quality of service delivery at the local level? Do your activities aim at strengthening the rule of law, the oversight and accountability of service providers?	☐ If yes, click here	☐
8	Is your program emphasizing civic engagement and participation of local communities including through traditional, religious and social leaders in implementing stabilization, recovery or resilience activities?	☐ If yes, click here	☐
9	Do any of your activities promote human rights? Or specifically integrate human rights promotion? Do any of your activities target security service providers in order to enhance the integrity and respect of human rights?	☐ If yes, click here	☐
10	Does your program specifically aim at enhanced participation of women in decision-making on security, peacebuilding, PVE, and development at all levels? Do your activities aim at equal participation of women in all governance structures or consultative mechanisms?	☐ If yes, click here	☐
11	Do your activities specifically contribute to the effective protection of women and girls from all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse?	☐ If yes, click here	☐
12	Do your activities place special emphasis on youth empowerment and their protection? Notably, do they engage youth in structured dialogues, conflict mediation as well as peacebuilding and reconciliation processes?	☐ If yes, click here	☐

| 13 | Do your programs aim at improving research, monitoring, reporting, analysis and advocacy to ensure that a gender- & youth-sensitive approach is mainstreamed in recovery, stabilization, peacebuilding and development processes? | ☐ If yes, click here | ☐ |

PART 3 **What activities of your organization are supporting humanitarian assistance, development, and education under the RSS in 2020?**	**Y**	**N**
14	Does your organization provide humanitarian assistance in one of the eight territories targeted by the RSS?	☐ If yes, click here	☐
15	Does your organization contribute to the return of displaced persons to their communities of origin based on the principles of voluntary, safe and dignified return?	☐ If yes, click here	☐
16	Does your organization provide affected populations access to quality psychosocial counselling services, and support community cohesion and trust-building interventions?	☐ If yes, click here	☐
17	Do your organization's activities aim at enhancing the resilience of communities, support and promote livelihoods, particularly in the agricultural sector (farming, fishing and livestock) in a way that takes account of climate change and environmental sustainability?	☐ If yes, click here	☐
18	Do your activities contribute to the mobilization of investments to promoting infrastructural development, or promote a conducive business environment that promote investments, trade and economic activity?	☐ If yes, click here	☐
19	Does your organization contribute to the access to equitable education for all women, boys and girls in a safe and secure environment under appropriate civilian authority? And to the development of an adequate education infrastructure? Does your organization promote a reformed education system in the targeted territories of the RSS?	☐ If yes, click here	☐
20	Does your organization promote professional, technical, and vocational training skill-acquisition programs in line with job market demand?	☐ If yes, click here	☐
21	Do your programs or activities contribute to the promotion of cultural and social learning, notably for increased interfaith understanding, tolerance and social cohesion?	☐ If yes, click here	☐

PART 4
What activities of your organization contributed to security and protection under the RSS in 2020?

		Y	N
22	Are your programs or activities specifically contributing to community safety and conflict prevention? (E.g. community policing, access to justice, legal empowerment, oversight of informal security providers, early-warning systems, armed violence reduction, etc.)	☐ If yes, click here	☐
23	Does your organization contribute to the development of a common regional approach to the disarmament, screening, prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration of persons associated with Boko Haram?	☐ If yes, click here	☐
24	Do your activities contribute to strengthening and harmonizing national transitional and criminal justice systems to effectively undertake the investigation and prosecution of persons associated with Boko Haram?	☐ If yes, click here	☐
25	Do your organization's activities contribute to the rehabilitation and reintegration of persons associated with Boko Haram, or other non-state armed groups, such as vigilantes/watchmen? And do these activities follow a coordinated or harmonized approach with neighboring countries?	☐ If yes, click here	☐
26	Is your organization active in the field of preventing violent extremism at the local, national or regional level?	☐ If yes, click here	☐

Concluding General Question on COVID-19, click here

LIST OF ACTIVITIES REPORTED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL TASK FORCE

Governance Cluster

PILLAR 1
Political Cooperation

SO1.   Enhancing Political Cooperation (To improve cooperation, coherence and complementarity among the LCB Member States)

SO2.   Strengthening National Capacities (To support National Governments to develop harmonized national coordination mechanisms and systems, including the Governors' Forum and the regional Inter-Parliamentary Committee for an effective implementation of the strategy in the Lake Chad Region)

SO3.   Role of RECs and Other Actors (To enhance and improve intra and inter regional cooperation between ECCAS, ECOWAS and CEMAC for Peace Security and Development in the LCB region)

SO4.   Enhancing Capacities of LCBC and AUC (To effectively enhance the capacities of the LCBC Secretariat and the AUC for the effective implementation of the strategy)

PARTNERS	INITIATIVES	TERRITORIES COVERED	RSS CONTRIBUTION
AUC, GIZ, CMI, LCBC	Inaugural Civil Society Consultative forum in Niamey, Niger. Deliberations and agreements reached at this meeting reaffirmed some of the strategic objectives of the RSS.	All	SO2
UNOCA and LCBC	Joint roadshows with LCBC to sensitize on RSS, technical level engagement with LCBC and AUC for greater engagement of ECCAS	Cameroon and Chad	SO3, SO4
UNOCA	Support to ECCAS on regional regulation of cross border pastoralism and transhumance	All	SO3
UNOWAS and LCBC	Joint roadshows with LCBC to sensitize on RSS, technical level engagement with LCBC and AUC	Niger and Nigeria	SO3, SO4

UNOCA, UNOWAS and LCBC	Jointly convening monthly meeting among UN entities to share information on Boko Haram impact. The RSS Secretariat is also invited. Regular joint visits to LCB countries and territories, conflict prevention and good offices.	Regional	SO1, SO3
UNDP	Regional Stabilization Facility (Regional Window), establishment of RSS Secretariat, cross-border coordination mechanisms (i.e. Regional Task Force, CIMIC Cell, CSO Platforms), development of Territorial Action Plans and Results Framework	All	SO2, SO3 and SO4
Institute for Security Studies	Provision of conflict analysis briefings, development of Policy Briefs and conflict analysis research. Provision of technical support to LCBC, tailored to needs (Memorandum of Understanding)	All	SO4
Okapi - RNI	Development of population perception surveys	Regional	SO4
Crisis Management Initiative	Technical support to LCBC, AUC and RSS Secretariat in preparation for the Governors' Forum	Regional	SO4
IOM	Organization of Regional Exchange Platform to promote regional discussions and promote regional cooperation and harmonization on DDRRR.	Regional	SO12
AfDB	Provision of training and capacity-building component for LCBC managers and government officials in beneficiary States.	All	SO4

PILLAR 5
Governance and the Social Contract

SO17.   Sharing Values of Good Governance (Governance norms, principles and best practices are adopted by LCBC member states)

SO18.   Improving Service Delivery (To restore and strengthen state authority and institutions capacity to enhance the scope and improve the quality of social service delivery at the local level)

SO19.   Enhancing Rule of Law and Accountability (To enhance the capacity of rule of law providers to deliver effective services to citizens, civilian oversight and accountability)

SO20.   Enhancing Public Participation and Civic Engagement (To strengthen civic engagement and participation in the implementation of the strategy)

SO21. Improving Cross-Border Cooperation (To strengthen cross-border and transboundary cooperation for mutually beneficial solutions and sub-regional integration)

PARTNERS	INITIATIVES	TERRITORIES COVERED	RSS CONTRIBUTION
IOM	Promotion of community-level dialogues and other community-based initiatives for reintegration and reconciliation (including the promotion of local level social cohesion platforms)	Niger (Diffa), Cameroon (Far North), Chad (Lac), Nigeria (Borno)	SO20
UNDP	Regional Stabilization Facility (Regional Window), support development of policies and research, support the identification of cross-border priorities for collaboration	All	SO20, SO21
UNDP	Regional Stabilization Facility (Country Windows), support to security and access to basic services, establishment of inclusive Stabilization Committees	Cameroon (Far North), Chad (Lac and Hadjer-Lamis), Niger (Diffa) and Nigeria (Borno)	SO18, SO19, SO20
Plan International	Youth leading stabilization in the LCB for the effective participation of young people in peacebuilding efforts. Support peace and security and strength stabilization efforts in the Lake Chad Basin by improving coordination of stabilization activities and therefore closing the gap between political intentions and realities on the ground.	Cameroon (Far North), Niger (Diffa) and Nigeria (Borno)	SO20, SO39, SO40
Human Security Collective	Promotion of dialogue	Cameroon (Far North)	SO20
IOM	Through its Displacement Tracking Matrix, IOM has developed the Stability Index, a tool to identify which factors are relatively more impactful on the stability of return areas, and the decisions of returnees to remain in place or to move. This tool is essential in designing assistance for durable solutions as well as a new instrument to inform transition and recovery with appropriate programming priorities, including for the restoration of effective governance and service delivery in areas of return as a step out of crisis.	Cameroon (Far North), Chad (Lac), Nigeria (Borno, Adamawa, Yobe)	SO18, SO19, SO20

PILLAR 9
Empowerment and Inclusion of Women and Youth

SO38. Promoting Women Participation, Empowerment and Socio-Economic Rights (UN, AUC and RECs frameworks for Women's Empowerment are domesticated and operationalized in national plans and Territorial Action Plans for the full and effective inclusion and participation of women and girls in the stabilization, recovery and resilience process, with provision for financial resources as well as coordination framework for the implementation of the National and Territorial Action Plan)

SO39. Youth Empowerment, Participation, and Protection (To ensure effective mechanisms are established to ensure that youth are protected, empowered and effectively engaged in structured dialogues, stabilization and peacebuilding process)

SO40. Monitoring and Accountability (To improve research, monitoring, reporting, analysis and advocacy ensures that a gender & youth-sensitive approaches are mainstreamed and that the stabilization process leverages effectively upon the capacities of girls and women)

PARTNERS	INITIATIVES	TERRITORIES COVERED	RSS CONTRIBUTION
UNESCO, UN Women, UNDP and UNICEF	"Enhancing Youth's skills to promote Peace, Security and socio-economic Resilience in crisis-affected regions of Cameroon". The overall objective of the activity is to strengthen the capacity of 30 young leaders of CSO and CBO in order to achieve youth participation in initiatives of peacebuilding. Joint initiative funded by the UN Peacebuilding Fund.	Cameroon (Far North) Nigeria (Adamawa)	SO39
Crisis Management Initiative	Technical support to the development of the webinar on Youth and the RSS, led by the AU PSD. On-demand support to the LCB Youth Network.	Regional	SO39
UNESCO, UNV, ONUDC, UNOCA, CEEAC and Payncop	"Young people, weavers of peace in the cross-border regions of Gabon, Cameroon and Chad". Empower young people who will thus become "wavers of peace", equip them with the necessary tools, and promote their contribution to the Central African Warning Mechanism (MARAC) of ECCAS, support and strengthen interstate cooperation on youth issues and risks and opportunities in transboundary areas.	Cameroon (Far North)	SO3, SO17, SO39
UN WOMEN	Support women leadership initiatives. Support member states to adopt and implement national action plans on RES1325 and quota on women's participation in decision making positions. Support to women empowerment centres.	Regional	SO39

Humanitarian and Development Cluster

PILLAR 4
Humanitarian Assistance

SO13. Humanitarian Life Saving Response (To assist affected populations have access to basic lifesaving assistance, including food and non-food items, clean water, health and sanitation support regardless of their respective areas of settlement)

SO14. Voluntary, Safe and Dignified Return and Resettlement (To ensure that displaced persons are supported in returning to their communities of original based on the principles of voluntary, safe and dignified return)

SO15. Protection (To ensure effective and full implementation of the Abuja Action Statement of 2016 on protection)

SO16. Psychosocial Support and Social Cohesion (To prove affected populations access to quality psychosocial counselling services, and to actively participate in community cohesion and trust building interventions)

PARTNERS	INITIATIVES	TERRITORIES COVERED	RSS CONTRIBUTION
AU	Inaugural Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Training Programme.	All	SO16
IOM	The Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) regularly captures, processes, and disseminates various layers of information to provide a better understanding of the evolving needs of mobile populations, on site or en route both of forced displacement and other migration flows.	All	SO14
IOM	Establishment of safe spaces for psychosocial counselling services. Direct humanitarian assistance and recovery solutions to people affected by the Lake Chad Basin crisis, Chadian returnees and migrants.	Cameroon (Far North), Chad, Niger (Diffa), Nigeria (Borno, Adamawa, Yobe)	SO13, SO14, SO16
WFP	Humanitarian assistance to crisis affected populations through the rapid response mechanism and the 'Dispositif National de Prevention et Gestion des Crises et Catastrophes'	Cameroon (North and Far North), Chad (Lac), Niger (Diffa), Nigeria (Borno, Adamawa, Yobe)	SO13

UNICEF, WFP	Enhanced Partnerships regarding Integrated approach to wasting (nutrition), Investing in school health and nutrition, including Social protection systems, supply chain and CBT	Chad, Niger (Diffa)	SO13
Plan international	PSS support integrated in children protection programme		
AfDB	Project to Support the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Vulnerable Groups in the Lake Chad Basin (PARSEBALT) provides for the implementation of several training and capacity-building activities for the benefit of young people, women and farmers in its area of intervention.	Chad	SO13, SO14

PILLAR 6

Socio-economic Recovery and Environmental Sustainability

SO22. Supporting Sustainable Livelihoods (To support and promote livelihoods, particularly in the agricultural sector (farming, fishing and livestock) in a way that takes account of climate change and environmental sustainability)

SO23. Improving Infrastructure for Regional Economic Integration (To mobilize investments to promote infrastructural development to increase economic, trade and cultural exchange)

SO24. Creating Conducive Business Environment (To ensure a conducive business environment is fostered through policy and legal frameworks that promote investments, trade and economic activities)

SO25. Ensuring Environmental Sustainability (To enhance the resilience of communities and systems around Lake Chad to adapt to environmental shocks for enhanced sustainability of interventions)

PARTNERS	INITIATIVES	TERRITORIES COVERED	RSS CONTRIBUTION
UNESCO, LCBC	Biosphere and Heritage of Lake Chad (BIOPALT). The project aims to promote peace, safeguard and enhance natural and cultural resources in order to improve local communities' sources of income and thus contribute to poverty reduction. Promoting peaceful collaboration amongst countries on sustainable management of trans boundary basins	Regional.	SO24, SO25
UNESCO	Setting–up of a water quality portal for the Lake Chad basin: satellite and field monitoring of 5 parameters (turbidity, chlorophyll, organic matter, PH, temperature)	Regional.	SO23

UNESCO	Promotion of green economy income-generating activities and restoration of degraded ecosystem	Niger (Diffa)	SO22, SO25
UNESCO	Scaling-Up Rural Households' Use of Renewable Energy and Energy-Efficient Technologies in Cameroon	Cameroon (North and Far North)	SO22
UNOCA	Supporting the development by ECCAS of a regional regulation on cross-border pastoralism and transhumance in Central Africa	Cameroon, Chad	SO23, SO24
IOM, FAO and UNHCR	Supporting communities in Lac to face the challenges of climate change, displacement and conflicts	All	SO22, SO25
UNDP	Regional Stabilization Facility (Country Windows). Access to sustainable livelihood opportunities and infrastructures	Cameroon (Far North), Chad (Lac and Hadjer-Lamis), Niger (Diffa) and Nigeria (Borno)	SO22, SO23
IOM	Creation of livelihood opportunities integrating conflict transformation approaches	Cameroon (Far North), Chad (Lac), Niger (Diffa), Nigeria (Borno, Adamawa, Yobe)	SO22
UNICEF, WFP	Enhanced Partnerships regarding Resilience Building.	Niger (Diffa)	SO22, SO25

PILLAR 7
Education, Learning and Skills

SO26. Restoring Quality Safe and Inclusive Education (To ensure the restoration and access of equitable education for all women, boys and girls in a safe and secure environment under appropriate civilian authority)

SO27. Promoting Professional, Vocational Training and Skills Acquisition (To promote professional technical and vocational training skill acquisition programmes in line with job market demand)

SO28. Reforming the Education Sector (To promote a reformed education system that is based on local realities)

SO29. Promoting Cultural and Social Learning (To promote cultural and social learning for increased interfaith understanding, tolerance and social cohesion)

SO30. Developing Education Infrastructures (To develop and improve adequate education infrastructure and ensure safe and secure environment for peaceful education)

SO31. Promoting Advocacy and Experience Sharing (To promote advocacy and experience sharing on education between LCBC Member States in the Region)

PARTNERS	INITIATIVES	TERRITORIES COVERED	RSS CONTRIBUTION
UNESCO	Raise awareness among the communities, decision-makers, persons in charge and national and local stakeholders about the importance of safeguarding living heritage, as well as to identify the elements of intangible cultural heritage affected by the crisis situation.	Niger (Diffa)	SO29
UNESCO	Preparation of a nomination of the cultural landscape of Lake Chad on the World Heritage List. Building teachers' capacities to strengthen learners' resilience to violent extremism and to foster their engagement as peace agents in their community.	Cameroon (Far North), Chad (Lac), Niger (Diffa), Nigeria (Yobe)	SO26, SO29
UNESCO	Emergency assessment and urgent interventions at cultural heritage sites, museums and collections at risk.	Cameroon (Far North)	SO29
WFP	Partnership for resilience and social cohesion	Niger (Diffa)	SO29
UNICEF/ UNFPA/ WFP	Adolescent girls project using the schools as a platform for services delivery, focusing on education for girls in crisis and conflict situations,	Niger (Diffa), Chad (Lac)	SO26
UNDP	Upgrading education infrastructures and education systems including vocational training.	Chad	SO27, SO28, SO30

PILLAR 9
Empowerment and Inclusion of Women and Youth

SO37. Protecting Women and Girls (To ensure effective protection measures that empower women and girls as beneficiaries and can effectively engage in the stabilization and peacebuilding process as well as prevention and response to violence extremism. Protect women and girls from all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse)

SO39. Youth Empowerment, Participation, and Protection (To ensure effective mechanisms are established to ensure that youth are protected, empowered and effectively engaged in structured dialogues, stabilization and peacebuilding process)

PARTNERS	INITIATIVES	TERRITORIES COVERED	RSS CONTRIBUTION
UN WOMEN	Support to MNJTF for Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. Program on resilience to fight against GBV and increase women participation in decision-making.	Regional.	SO31, SO5, SO38
UN WOMEN	Pilot program on Second Chance education combining: basic literacy, vocational training and incomes generating activities. The program supports advocacy on young girls access to education.	Cameroon	SO38, SO27
Okapi - RNI	Radio programme "Le magazine au feminin" women produced radio show	Regional	SO37

Security and Protection Cluster

PILLAR 2
Security and Human Rights

SO5. Enhancing Support to MNJTF Operations (To enhance support to the MNJTF to enable it to continue to fulfil its mandate)

SO6. Reinforcement of Community Security and Restoration of Rule of Law (To enhance capacities for safety and security at the community level through increased responsive law enforcement that extends and safeguards the rule of law to all areas, as military forces clear the territory under Boko Haram control)

SO7. Management of Vigilantes (Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of vigilante groups is managed through appropriate national initiatives.

SO8. Promoting Human Rights (To ensure that security service providers operate at the highest levels of integrity and respect for human rights based on international and continental norms and standards, through effective internal and external oversight and accountability mechanisms. With appropriate remedial mechanisms to address alleged human rights abuses)

PARTNERS	INITIATIVES	TERRITORIES COVERED	RSS CONTRIBUTION
UNDP	Regional Stabilization Facility (Country Window). Provision of logistical support to increase the effective presence of MNJTF in project target areas. Mapping of CSO and CBOs working on human rights. Partnership building with COGINTA, EU funded INGO, active in capacity building for security forces (infrastructures, training). Training of security forces and civil authorities.	Chad (Lac)	SO5, SO6, SO8
UNDP	Regional Stabilization Facility (Country Window). Improving community safety.	Cameroon (Far North), Chad (Lac), Niger (Diffa) and Nigeria (Borno)	SO6
UNITAR	Reinforcement of the capacities of the Multi-National Joint Task Force.	Regional.	SO5
UNODC	Facilitate the use and admissibility as evidence in national criminal courts of information collected, handled, preserved and shared by the military to prosecute terrorist offences ("Military Evidence") and develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). training was on the effective investigation, prosecution and adjudication of terrorism cases with respect for human rights, as well as countering/disrupting financing of terrorism, illicit cross-border firearms trafficking. Legal aid to prisoners (Niger with UNV)	Cameroon, Chad and Niger	SO6
UNODC	Technical assistance to the national security, law enforcement and criminal justice actors.	Nigeria (Borno)	SO6
UN WOMEN	Build capacities of the police and national armies on protection of women in conflict and humanitarian settings.	Nigeria, Niger and Cameroon	SO37, SO8
AU	The development of Standard Operating Procedures for the Treatment of Boko Haram associated persons in the Lake Chad Basin. SOP for the Treatment of Boko Haram Associated Persons in the Lake Chad Basin (**2019**)	Regional	SO8
AU	Human Rights Training Workshop for the MNJTF (**2019**)	Regional	SO5, SO8

AU	Development of relevant guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures to support the MNJTF on the areas of: • Handling persons associated with Boko Haram (finalised) and • Enhancing the Management of Recovered SALW and address the Threat Of ERW/IEDs (under development); and The Development of the Database on recovered arms and persons associated with BH (under development)	Regional	SO5
UNODC	UNODC provides technical assistance to national security, law enforcement and criminal justice actors to support them in re-establishing the rule-of-law and access to justice in Cameroon, Chad and Niger in response to Boko Haram terrorism. Through series of legislative assistance and awareness raising activities open to a wide range of various nationals, UNODC contributed in ensure legal empowerment as well as reinforcing national legislation and its use, in compliance with international standards and human rights.	Niger, Chad, Cameroun	SO6, SO8
SHN	HSN and local organisation in cooperation with University of Maroua set up HR observatory.	Cameroun	SO8
Okapi RNI	Radio broadcast on HR awareness rights (know your rights).	Regional	SO8

PILLAR 3

Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of persons associated with Boko Haram

SO9. Screening and Disarmament (To ensure that persons associated with Boko Haram are received, screened and, if relevant, disarmed according to a common regional approach in line with international and continental standards)

SO10. Transitional Justice (To strengthen and harmonize national transitional and criminal justice systems to effectively undertake the investigation and prosecution of persons associated with Boko Haram and other forms of accountability)

SO11. Rehabilitation and Reconciliation (To ensure that persons formerly associated with Boko Haram and other violent extremist groups are rehabilitated according to a common regional approach linked to later reintegration activities and including psychosocial support, health, nutrition (in a first phase) and vocational and income-generating activities (in a second phase).

SO12.   Reinsertion and Reintegration (To ensure that persons associated with Boko Haram, members of vigilante groups/vigilance committees, returnees (including former prisoners), youth at risk and victims of Boko Haram receive community-based reintegration support, following a harmonized regional approach)

PARTNERS	INITIATIVES	TERRITORIES COVERED	RSS CONTRIBUTION
IOM	Support to governments of the region for the design and implementation of legal and operational frameworks for DDRR. Development of case management system. Regional DDRRR program. Enhancing the capacities of the Secretariat through the organization and delivery of consultancies aimed at addressing regional aspects of the SPRR process.	All	SO9, SO12
UNODC	Collaboration with National Association of Women Judges of Nigeria (NAWJN). Strengthening of knowledge of judges, mostly female on the gender dimensions of the criminal justice response to terrorism. Regular deployment of federal counter-terrorism prosecutors to the Joint Investigation Centre in Maiduguri.	Nigeria (Borno)	SO10
Institute for Security Studies	Research on exiting from Boko Haram.	Regional	SO12
UNOWAS, UNOCA and CTED	Governments are sensitized on the need to coordinate their approaches to disarmament, screening, prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration of persons associated with Boko Haram.	Regional	
IOM	Support to the Government for the development of a national program for defectors and harmonized approach. Support for the prosecution to Ministry of Justice, Prosecutors and Central Service for the Fight against Terrorism, including regular trainings. Trainings on PSS for law enforcement officials. Design and operationalization of rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives, including small grants. Assessments on DDRR, including on gender approaches.	Niger (Diffa)	SO10, SO11, SO12, SO38, SO39

IOM	Creation of an Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR and technical sub-committee. Support to the Government for the development and implementation of legal and operational frameworks for DDRR. Assessments on DDRR (including on gender approaches) and labor market survey in preparation for rehabilitation and reintegration programs and implementation of community-based reconciliation and reintegration initiatives.	Cameroon (Far North)	SO12, SO38
IOM	Support to DDRR Steering Committee (Ministry of Justice) for the development and implementation of legal and operational frameworks for DDRR. Development of a case management system for the design and operationalization of rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives (Ministry of Women and Social Affairs). Reconciliation and stabilization activities, including dialogue processes for conflict prevention and preparation for the reintegration.	Chad (Lac)	SO12, SO39
UNDP	Regional Stabilization Facility (Regional Window). Technical support to LCBC for the harmonization of community-based reconciliation and reintegration processes. Support the development of a background report on the status of SPRR processes in the LCB.	Regional	SO12
UNDP, UNODC, IOM, CTED, CCT	Joint initiatives for harmonizing SPRR processes.	Regional	
UN WOMEN	Conduct of a study on reintegration of women and girls associated with Boko Haram.	Regional	SO12
UN DPO/ OROLSI	Human right compliance in DDR interventions, Guidelines on Community Violence Reduction (CVR)	Regional	SO8, SO12

PILLAR 8

Prevention of Violent Extremism and Building Peace

SO32. Supporting National Capacities for PVE (To support the development and implementation of national strategies and action plans for PVE in-line with international obligations and best practices)

SO33. PVE Education, Knowledge and Capacities (To build up indigenous capacity in order to increase knowledge about the phenomenon and drivers of violent extremism)

SO34. Mobilizing Communities and Counter-Narratives (To empower local communities as actors to prevent, anticipate, and counter radical narratives)

SO35. Promoting Cross-Border Cooperation for P/CVE (To enhance and empower local, regional and international cooperation based on synergy, appropriation and coordination at all levels)

SO36. Supporting Peace Architecture (To build, review and strengthen local and national peace architecture, including early warning and early response mechanisms)

PARTNERS	INITIATIVES	TERRITORIES COVERED	RSS CONTRIBUTION
AU	The AU supports the enhanced participation of women in decision-making on security, peace building and PVE at all levels. Through its FEMWISE initiative, the AUC seeks to promote the participation of women in the Lake Chad Basin. The AU FEMWISE Initiative, CMI and the AU RSS team are currently rolling out mediation capacity building programme for women in the Lake Chad Basin.	Regional	SO35
UNODC	Training-of-trainers series on preventing and countering violent extremism.	Nigeria	SO33
UNESCO	Development of a tutorial to present the composition of Cameroon population to help reduce radicalization and violence based on tribal specificities. Inclusion of Human Rights and rule of law in transformative pedagogy education guide for PVE.	Cameroon Regional	SO34 SO33
UNDP	Support MNJTF for the development of a Strategic Communication Plan, support to strategic communication and support for implementation of National PVE Strategies and Action Plans.	Regional	SO35, SO5
Human Security Collective	Observatory on HR while countering terrorism is an initiative implemented by local networks. Analysis on the root causes of violent extremism (with University of Maroua). Program on freedom of religion with youth networks.	Cameroon (Far North)	SO33, SO34
IOM	Collaboration with local authorities and traditional leaders in Preventing Violent extremism within communities along the border of Niger and Nigeria. Involvement of traditional leaders, women, youth and religious leaders in Peace Committees.	Niger (Diffa) and Nigeria (Borno)	SO34, SO35, SO36

Okapi Radio	Radio programmes produced in Maiduguri in Kanuri are broadcast across the Lake Chad basin. The project's objective is to improve cross-communication and interaction and so reduce the space for Boko Haram/ISWAP to dominate communication in the region. Kawe (Alternative Narratives) programme seeks to entrench the culture of peaceful coexistence and reconciliation.	Regional	SO35, SO36
ISS	ISS actively engages with local, national and regional level entities and networks working on PVE in the Lake Chad Basin, the Sahel, East Africa and the Horn, as well as Southern Africa.	Regional	SO32

PILLAR 9

Empowerment and Inclusion of Women and Youth

SO37. Protecting Women and Girls (To ensure effective protection measures that empower women and girls as beneficiaries and can effectively engage in the stabilization and peacebuilding process as well as prevention and response to violence extremism. Protect women and girls from all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse)

SO39. Youth Empowerment, Participation, and Protection (To ensure effective mechanisms are established to ensure that youth are protected, empowered and effectively engaged in structured dialogues, stabilization and peacebuilding process)

PARTNERS	INITIATIVES	TERRITORIES COVERED	RSS CONTRIBUTION
UN WOMEN	Ensuring women's civil society organizations active involvement in the prevention of community conflict and the fight against violent extremism and in formal and informal peace mechanisms, training and capacity building of MNJTF Officers on protection of women and girls in military operations	Regional	SO37, SO38, SO34
IOM	Research on the gender dimensions of DDRR in the Lake Chad Basin Region to increase knowledge on the gender dynamics in association and engagement, disassociation and disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration and development of recommendations for stakeholders at the national and local levels to promote gender-sensitive and -responsive DDRRR.	Regional	SO38

Annex C

REGIONAL STABILIZATION FACILITY ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY

Despite deteriorating security situations and Covid-19 pandemic, the UNDP Regional Stabilisation Facility (RSF) for the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) region has made **substantive progress during the period from September, 1 2019 to December, 31 2020**. Conceived as a support to the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience of the Boko Haram-affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin (RSS) (adopted by the Lake Chad Basin Commission in August 2018), the RSF aims to promote "immediate stabilisation" (Results area 1; Outputs 1-3), in the affected territories of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria (through the RSF National Windows), and "extended stabilisation" (Results area 2; Outputs 4-6), in support to the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the African Union Commission (through the RSF Regional Window).

During the reporting period, a total of **16 Joint Action Plans** (JAPs) have been approved in target areas of **Far North region of Cameroon; Hadjer Lamis and Lac provinces of Chad; Diffa region of Niger; and Borno, Yobe and Adamawa (BAY) states of Nigeria**. Achievements to date testify that **an area-based, multi-sectoral approach is successful in promoting stability in the target communities.** JAPs impact has been positive in strengthening security architectures with community mobilization (Output 1), promoting access to essential infrastructure and basic services (Output 2) and providing livelihoods opportunities (Output 3).

Community Stabilisation Committees (CSCs) - created in 13 target locations and involving local communities, public authorities and security

forces - **are at the heart of the social contract building approach and contribute to increase state legitimacy and people's trust**. At the CSCs, community security-related issues including on gender, livelihoods and infrastructures, are discussed and addressed amongst all key stakeholders. In the JAPs locations, safety and security for residents, displaced and returnees is being enhanced through **strengthened Civil-Military Cooperation** (CIMIC), **support to increased law enforcement presence and promotion of human rights, civilian protection and access to justice**.

The construction of dozens of infrastructures for access to basic services (security, public administration, education, health, markets) **and the activities undertaken to provide livelihoods opportunities to thousands of people in these areas,** are part of this same process. A solid **gender and human rights approach**, **consideration of multidimensional environmental impacts** on local populations, and **coordination at both JAPs and LCB region level with multiple actors** are fundamental and cross-cutting axes of the.

The RSF Regional Window has laid the foundations on which "extended stabilisation" will be based, **enabling the establishment of the LCBC Stabilisation Secretariat**, which serves as both the programme and policy advisory hub for the LCBC and the AUC on RSS implementation (anchored on 9 thematic pillars), **as well as key cross-border mechanisms for cooperation and coordination, such as the RSS Regional Task Force** (articulated in three strategic cluster to promote humanitarian,

development and peace nexus), **the CIMIC Cell and the LCB Regional Platform of Civil Society Organizations**. It has also supported the elaboration of the RSS Regional Action Plan (RAP), the development of the RSS Results Framework, as well as political partnerships and leadership to promote the stabilisation.

Some of the main **lessons learnt** are the following: (i) understanding of the challenges and mindset of security actors of state/vigilantes, and their interface between each other and the communities is crucial; (ii) security concerns and stabilization needs widely vary in each community; (iii) the involvement of local communities and public authorities has been decisive; (iv) coordination between state government partners, military counterparts is found to be critical in ensuring understanding and awareness about stabilization concept and smooth implementation of its activities; and (v) the need to have the appropriate resources (human resources, access to timely and good quality information, etc.) to engage in continuous working-level exchange.

The assumptions of the RSF **Theory of Change** remain valid for the time being, although there are important challenges in such a complex field. Likewise, **RSF proof of concept**, based on several success criteria, can be considered acceptable: the CSCs are operational and progressively fulfilling their objectives; the degree of civilian and military involvement is effective and various agreements have been signed with key institutional actors to implement RSF and strengthen ownership; there is a considerable presence of Security Forcess in the JAPs; progress is being made in shaping RSS Territorial Action Plans, with Pillar Working Groups established in 5 of the 8 territories envisaged; and the perception of local communities on security, social cohesion and local people's trust in public authorities is a model for RSF to follow.

Such RSF successes, however, are still at relatively small scale in comparison to the vast needs for stabilization in the LCB region. **The achievements of the RSF outlined above have to be reconciled with important operational and coordination challenges** in both RSF areas - in a context of persistent insecurity and violence -, so that JAPs can lay the foundations for stakeholders to contribute most effectively to the achievement of RSS objectives. RSF coordination between humanitarian, development and peace actors is also a major challenge, despite the progress made in this area.

To build on the achievements of the RSF and link them effectively to RSS objectives progress is needed to **strengthen capacities, improve coordination and reinforce the ownership processes of the actors involved**. The rapid response principle of the RSF has to be maintained with dedicated arrangements for both operations and programme support. There is also an **immediate need for additional investments to consolidate and scale-up the achievements of RSF** by replicating the success model and expanding territorial coverage.

During 2021, RSF will further **strengthen partnerships with government and security actors, donor partners, and other UN and humanitarian actors at community, state, federal and LCB regional levels**. Also, the RSF will continue **to build a proof of concept in the target communities, building on the achievements and lessons learnt from the activities and results achieved in 2020**, particularly focusing on completing JAPs activities with enhanced security and basic service provision and expanded livelihood opportunities.