



FINAL COMMUNIQUE

5th EDITION OF THE LAKE CHAD BASIN GOVERNORS' FORUM FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION ON STABILIZATION, PEACEBUILDING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

The fifth meeting of the Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum for Regional Cooperation on Stabilization, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development (hereafter the LCB Governors' Forum) was held in Maiduguri, Nigeria from the 29th to 31st January 2025. Theme of the meeting was, "Rebuilding the Lake Chad Basin: Consolidating Gains, Commitment to Peace, Cross-Border Cooperation, Security, and Sustainable Development for a Resilient Community". The meeting was convened by the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and hosted by the Government of Yobe State (Nigeria), with support from the African Union Commission (AUC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The meeting was declared open by the President of Nigeria HE Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR represented by the Vice President HE Sen Kashim Shettima GCON, and marked by the participation of the Governors from the Far North region of Cameroon, the Hadjer-Lamis and Lac provinces of Chad, Diffa region of Niger, as well as the governors of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States of Nigeria. Also present were representatives of member states, the AUC, traditional rulers, civil society organizations, the media, embassies, technical and financial partners, including from the United Nations system, International Support Group (ISG), and International Financial Institutions (IFIs).

Following this three-day meeting, the following declaration was adopted:

The LCB Governors' Forum recognizes and commends the substantial achievements made under the *Regional Strategy for Stabilization, Recovery, and Resilience of the Areas-affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin Region (RS SRR)*, which have significantly contributed to stabilization, peace, and sustainable development in the Lake Chad Basin region.

In the light of the significant progress made in the implementation of the RS SRR, the LCB Governors' Forum:

Commended the Governments of the Lake Chad Basin countries, regional institutions, and international partners for their unwavering commitment to stabilization, peacebuilding, and sustainable development.

Welcomed the efforts of the LCBC and its partners in facilitating the technical validation of the adjusted RS SRR in 2024 and encourages the LCBC Council of Ministers and the AU Peace and Security Council to endorse the revised strategy. The Forum also reaffirms the commitment to strengthen partnerships with the private sector, international financial institutions, and regional development banks to mobilize financing for the RS SRR.

Commended the Governors of the eight most affected territories of the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) in Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria for their steadfast political leadership, unwavering commitment, and strong support for the effective implementation of the RS SRR in their respective territories.

Acknowledged the substantial progress achieved in advancing stabilization, peace, and sustainable development across the LCB region since the inaugural meeting of the Forum in May 2018 in Maiduguri, Nigeria.

Commended the significant contributions and achievements of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and the troop-contributing countries of the LCBC—Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria, and Benin—in combating non-state armed groups, notably Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). These efforts have greatly reduced the threat posed by these terrorist groups, enhanced civilian protection, and compelled many members of these groups to surrender.

Emphasized its commitment to redouble efforts and further strengthen the MNJTF and other efforts to completely eliminate the continued threat posed by Boko Haram, ISWAP, and other terrorist groups in the region.

Recognized the AU's unwavering commitment to the MNJTF, as reflected in the Communiqué of the 973rd meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council, and commends the role of national and sub-national governments, regional and sub-regional institutions, and partners in addressing the challenges posed by exits from areas controlled by terrorist groups.

Commended the technical validation of the Community-Based Reconciliation and Reintegration Policy (CBRR) and encouraged its endorsement at the next LCBC Council of Ministers meeting. It called upon member states to implement the policy effectively. It further endorses the recommendation of the 5th Steering Committee of the LCBC to develop a Regional Policy on Transitional Justice for the Lake Chad Basin region.

Underscored the critical need for the rehabilitation and reintegration of former associates of Boko Haram and ISWAP who have left these groups, calling on LCB states, institutions, and partners to provide the necessary human and material resources to address this challenge effectively.

Acknowledged the progress made in addressing the humanitarian situation in the region, but noted with concern that the effects of by climate change, illiteracy, youth unemployment, severe economic challenges, and frequent natural disasters still persist in the region.

Stressed the disproportionate impact of the security crisis on vulnerable populations, particularly women, children, and reaffirmed the need to protect and assist all affected civilians in compliance with humanitarian principles and international law.

Noted with concern the suspension of donor support for Niger’s National Window of the Regional Stabilization Facility (RSF), which could negatively impact progress across the region, and called for a concerted effort to urgently address this challenge.

Welcomed the establishment of the Special Multi-Partner Delivery Fund (SMDF) and the Nexus Funding Facility (NFF) as vital mechanisms to support and coordinate stabilization, recovery, and resilience initiatives across the region.

Key Resolutions and Strategic Commitments

The **Lake Chad Basin Governors’ Forum** reaffirms its commitment to advancing stabilization, recovery, and resilience in the region. In this regard, the Forum commits to:

1. Ensuring member states strengthen strategic support to, and operational capacity of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and/or invest in transborder security.
2. Ensuring member states effectively occupy the Lake Chad Islands as a means of strengthening transboundary security, with a focus on securing and controlling the waterways.
3. Ensuring that remnant of all Non-State Armed Groups are completely neutralized in all the member states.
4. Intensifying efforts to combat illicit trade of arms, and illicit drug trafficking and drug abuse, especially among youth.
5. Scaling up climate resilient initiatives and environmental protection efforts to support the rehabilitation of the Lake Chad Basin ecosystems and biodiversity.
6. Strengthening collaboration with traditional rulers, especially in facilitating reconciliation and reintegration processes.
7. Strengthening women and youth engagement in stabilization, recovery, and resilience initiatives, ensuring their needs and priorities are effectively addressed.
8. Enhancing the role of civil society and traditional authorities in designing, implementing, and monitoring regional stabilization, recovery, and resilience efforts.
9. Working with the LCBC on advocacy and fundraising with partners and donors towards continuation of stabilization activities in Niger.
10. Facilitating the establishment of “Free trade Zones” in the Lake Chad region, as a means of promoting cross-border trade and economic connectivity.
11. Identifying and investing in the construction and /or rehabilitation of cross-border roads as a means of promoting transboundary trade and strengthening security.
12. Updating and facilitating implementation of the Territorial Action Plans (TAPs) to align with the adjusted RS SRR.
13. Strengthening resource mobilization efforts through the Special Multi-Partner Delivery Fund (SMDF) and the Nexus Funding Facility (NFF), and other regional funding initiatives to drive impactful and sustained progress.

The LCB Governors' Forum further

Expresses appreciation to H.E. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR the President and the Commander in Chief of the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the host Governor H.E. Mai Mala Buni of Yobe state and the people of Nigeria for their hospitality.

Further expresses appreciation to the Governor of Hadjer-Lamis Her Excellency Ildjima Abdraman for her leadership and commitment in steering the LCB Governors Forum between 2023 and 2024 and commends the acceptance of the chairmanship of the LCB Governors' Forum by the Governor of Yobe State HE Hon. Mai Mala Buni CON.

The LCB Governors' Forum and the LCBC further wish to acknowledge and express appreciation for the technical and financial support from Yobe State Government, the AUC, the UNDP and the ISG, and other immeasurable support from Borno state Government and the Federal Government of Nigeria for the organization of the 5th Edition of the LCB Governors forum.

Further expresses its appreciation to all participants, including representatives of civil society, traditional and religious rulers, the UN system, academia, media and partner organizations, the ISG and European Union, for their participation and engagement during the meeting.

Agrees that the next meeting of the LCB Governors' Forum shall take place next year (2026) in the Republic of Niger.

Done on this 31st day of January 2025, in Maiduguri, Nigeria.