



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

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

**FINAL JOINT
COMMUNIQUÉ**

From 5 to 7 July 2023, the fourth 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 N'djamena, Republic of Chad. Under the theme, "New Opportunities for Peace in a Shifting Security Context" the Forum was convened by the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and hosted by the Government of Chad, with technical support from the African Union Commission (AUC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Government of Chad.

The Forum was attended by Governors from the Far North and North regions of Cameroon, the Hadjer-Lamis and Lac provinces of Chad, Diffa region of Niger, and Borno State of Nigeria. Representatives of the Governors of Adamawa and Yobe States of Nigeria also attended. Also present were the African Union (AU), the United Nations (UN) system, multilateral and bilateral institutions, donor governments, civil society organizations, traditional and religious leaders, and the media.

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

Commends the Governors of the eight most affected Lake Chad Basin (LCB) territories in Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, for their political leadership, commitment and support in the implementation of the RS-SRR in their territories.

Recognises appreciable and significant progress made in the implementation of stabilization, peacebuilding and sustainable development in the LCB region since the inaugural meeting of the LCB Governors' Forum in May 2018 in Maiduguri, Nigeria, under the chairmanship of the Governor of Borno State, Nigeria.

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

Commends the efforts and significant progress made by the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and troop-contributing countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), namely, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, and Benin, in the fight against terrorist groups in the region (i.e. Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP)), which has significantly reduced the threat posed by these terrorist groups, enhanced civilian protection and forced many of their members to surrender.

Emphasises that, despite the operational successes of the MNJTF and national forces, Boko Haram and other armed terrorist groups continue to operate in, and remain a threat to, the countries of the region and, hence, wishes to highlight the need to enhance efforts to further degrade and completely eliminate these terrorist groups.



Notes the urgent necessity for ex-Boko Haram and ISWAP fighters who have surrendered to the authorities to be rehabilitated and reintegrated into the community, and calls on LCB States, institutions and partners to take steps to meet this challenge, including through the provision of the necessary human and material resources.

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

Recognises the AU's unwavering commitment and support to the MNJTF as highlighted in the Communiqué of the 973rd meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council on the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram, held on 18 January 2021.

Notes the fundamental role of the LCB Commission, sub-national governments, institutions and partners in responding to the mass exits from terrorist groups in the region (Boko Haram and ISWAP), commending in particular the Borno Model, and recognizing the need to enhance community-based reintegration and transitional justice initiatives across the region;

Recalls the UN Security Council Resolutions S/RES/2573 (2021) and S/RES/2475 (2019) on the Protection of Civilians in armed conflicts, stressing the particular impact that armed conflict has on women, children (including as refugees and internally displaced persons), and other civilians who may have specific vulnerabilities (including persons with disabilities and older persons), and the protection and assistance needs of all affected civilian populations.

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

Recognizes the importance of the role and implications of vigilante groups and government-affiliated security actors in stabilization efforts in the region, with a view to preventing renewed instability and other forms of insecurity during stabilization and in aftermath of conflict;

And notes that the fourth forum took place at a historical juncture in which the implementation of the RS-SRR is approaching the end of its first phase and the commencement of its second phase, providing a unique opportunity for RSS stakeholders to take stock and envision improvements in the ways and means of implementing the RS-SRR;



In the light of the significant progress made in the implementation of the RS SRR since its inception in 2018, and over its first phase due to end in 2024, including appreciable successes in improving security and basic services in the region, the LCB Governors' Forum agreed to:

- i. firmly commit to working with their partners to upscale and enhance joint efforts towards stabilizing, building peace, and fostering sustainable development, across the Lake Chad Basin, through enhancing livelihoods and infrastructure, maintaining and improving security, the greater restoration of state authority, promoting greater dialogue, and improving cross-border cooperation;
- ii. urge partners to sustain their commitment and action toward implementing the goals of stabilization, recovery and resilience;
- iii. urge partners to further prioritize socio-economic development in the LCB region as the primary means of sustainably addressing and eventually ending the crisis in the region;
- iv. urge the African Union to continue and enhance its support for the implementation of the RS-SRR including coordination of Commission-wide efforts for stabilization and additional support to the MNJTF to work towards broader stabilization measures in the Lake Chad Basin Region;
- v. urge continental and international support for the additional provision of more security assistance to MNJTF to enable it improve on its efforts to better provide the necessary security for the more effective implementation of the RS-SRR;
- vi. commend national and local governments, donors and UNDP for the results achieved under the Regional Stabilisation Facility (RSF), leading to the return of over 400,000 internally displaced persons in the four most-affected countries;
- vii. urge partners to scale-up their support to assist national and sub-national authorities with their efforts to provide protection and sustainable comprehensive solutions to the difficult situation faced by refugees and IDPs in the LCB region;
- viii. underscore the importance of securing more durable funding and financing, including by expanding the partnership base and including the private sector, to address the increased ambitions for stability in the region;
- ix. acknowledge the importance of the Special Multi-Partner Delivery Facility as a key support mechanism for the next phase of RS-SRR and urge partners to ensure that it is rapidly scaled up;
- x. acknowledge the increasing role of the African Development Bank in providing financing for the implementation of the RS-SRR;
- xi. urge partners to continue to respect the key principles of RSF implementation;
- xii. prioritize and emphasise the durability and sustainability of RS-SRR programs and projects in their territories, and to make this a design and implementation goal in phase two of the RS-SRR, and make the necessary connections to the new African continental free trade agreement and economic integration system;



- xiii. reiterate the need to enhance the nexus between the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding communities, considering the complex nature of the challenges in the region and based on a more systemic understanding of the context;

- xiv. remain firmly committed to the preparation and adoption of a Community-Based Reconciliation and Reintegration Policy serving as a foundation for national and/or sub-national reconciliation activities;

- xv. continue joint reflection on the role of vigilante groups and other government-affiliated security actors in the region, through the adoption of operational guidelines and actions (including those aimed at enhancing control and professionalization of these groups), adherence to international human rights standards;

- xvi. build on existing structures, processes and mechanisms to re-integrate vigilantes and government-affiliated security actors into civilian life, rather than creating new ones and invite Governors as well as national actors and international partners to include such arrangements into their efforts for peace and security in the region;

- xvii. ensure respect for the principle of equity between ex-fighters being reintegrated into their communities and host communities;

- xviii. accelerate efforts at preparing a regional transitional justice framework for the LCB that leverages existing systems and institutions , and ensures sustainable recovery and long term resilience of communities;

- xix. enhance efforts at building local and regional capacity for the emergent climate security challenges in the LCB region, as well as mobilizing resources for the LCBC Initiative to improve the hydraulic capacity of the principal tributaries of the Lake Chad and develop the Lake, in an environmentally sensitive way;

- xx. take joint steps with partners to enhance livelihoods in the borderland areas of the region, including through greater investments and improvements in agropastoral production; cross-border mobility, trade and cooperation; provision of necessary incentives; vocational and technical training; elimination of sexual violence as an impediment to female engagement in economic activities; improve the relevant policy and legal frameworks; enhancing local governance capacities and conflict resolution systems; improve infrastructure; and strengthen state-society social contracts;

- xxi. take greater account of the gendered nature of the challenges in the LCB region, and the importance of ensuring that women's and girls' priorities are reflected in future stabilization and development efforts;

- xxii. redouble efforts to empower and provide better opportunities for women and youth;

- xxiii. build strong partnerships with private sector, including international and regional banks and provide new and innovative financing mechanisms to address the urgent nature of the humaninatian crisis;

- xxiv. ensure effective mobilization and engagement of civil society organizations in the implementation and monitoring of the RS-SRR;



- xxv. continue to share good practices and models, and strengthen crossborder intelligence and information sharing;
- xxvi. report on corresponding progress made on the above regional priorities during the next meeting of the LCB Governors' Forum;

Expresses appreciation to H.E. Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno, Transitional President of the Republic of Chad, the host Governors, and the people of Chad for their hospitality.

Further expresses appreciation to the Governor of the Far North region, Cameroon for his leadership and commitment in steering the Governors Forum between 2021 and 2023 and commends the acceptance of the chairpersonship of the LCB Governors' Forum by the Governor of Hadjer-Lamis.

Acknowledges the immense technical support provided by the African Union Commission and the United Nations Development Programme. The Forum and LCBC further wishes to acknowledge and express appreciation for the financial support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany, the United Kingdom, Sweden, The Netherlands, and the African Development Bank, the European Union and Japan.

Further expresses its appreciation to all participants, including representatives of civil society, traditional and religious leaders, academia, media and partner organisations, for their participation and engagement during the meeting.

The Lake Chad Basin Governor's Forum agrees that the next annual Forum will be held in Nigeria.

Done on this 7th day of July 2023, in N'Djamena, Republic of Chad.

In Partnership with :

