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Editorial

May 22, 1964 – May 22, 2026: 62 Years of Commitment to the Lake Chad Basin

May 22, 1964 remains a landmark date in the history of regional cooperation in Africa. On that day, the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) was established, driven by a shared vision among the riparian states, determined to join forces to manage, preserve, and sustainably harness a vital resource: Lake Chad.

Sixty-two years later, this anniversary provides a valuable opportunity to assess the progress made, to acknowledge the achievements accomplished, and to renew collective commitment in the face of persistent and emerging challenges.

Since its inception, LCBC has positioned itself as a key strategic framework for dialogue, cooperation, and regional integration. It has successfully united its member States around a fundamental mission: to ensure the sustainable and equitable management of water resources and ecosystems within the basin, for the benefit of the populations that depend on them for their livelihoods. Over decades, the Commission has demonstrated a remarkable capacity to adapt to climatic, economic, and security changes.

Today, the Lake Chad Basin stands at a major turning point in its history. Challenges related to climate variability and population pressure are compounded by complex issues such as accelerated ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss, insecurity, and growing socio-economic development needs. In this context, the role of the LCBC appears more crucial than ever.

In response to these challenges, the Commission has initiated innovative measures, promoted Integrated Water Resources Management, supported ecosystem restoration, and encouraged forward-looking approaches to community resilience. It also plays a central coordinating role among member States, Technical and Financial Partners, and local stakeholders, thereby contributing to the development of sustainable, inclusive, and concerted solutions.

The year 2026 is part of this dynamic of renewal and action. It has been marked by major events, notably the holding of the 71st Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers, during which the appointment of a new Executive Secretary was endorsed. The assumption of

office by Ambassador Ibrahim Babani thus opens a new strategic phase for the Commission.

A Seasoned Diplomat at a Decisive Moment!

Ambassador Babani brings over 29 years of diplomatic experience. Serving within Nigeria's diplomatic corps since 1997, he has held notable positions in Mali, Indonesia, and Malaysia. His solid expertise in multilateral diplomacy, mediation, and development cooperation places him in a strong position to lead the LCBC at a time when the region continues to face complex environmental, security, and humanitarian challenges.

His appointment, endorsed by the Member States and officially announced during the 71st ordinary session of the Council of Ministers held on March 6, 2026, was warmly welcomed across the basin. Stakeholders believe it comes at a timely moment, as the Commission intensifies the implementation of major regional programs, including the Regional Strategy for Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience (RS-SRR 2.0), as well as the Strategic Action Programme (SAP 2023–2037).

In his inaugural address, Ambassador Babani stated, and I quote:

“I would like to express my deep gratitude for the confidence placed in my humble person. I look forward with great interest to working in close synergy with our regional and international partners, in order to strengthen the joint management of transboundary water resources, sustainably support the livelihoods of the populations, and promote stability across the basin, while actively contributing to strengthening the mission of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF).”

Furthermore, the convening of the Council of Ministers of Defense of Troop-Contributing Countries (TCCs) to the Multinational Joint Task Force has helped to strengthen security coordination in the region. Finally, the launch of the Project to Support the Restoration of the Ecological and Economic Functions of the Lake Chad Basin (PARFEBALT) represents a major step forward in promoting sustainable development and stabilizing the basin.

This anniversary is also a moment of praise: a moment of appreciation for Member States' unwavering commitment, for partners for their decisive support, and above all for the communities of the basin, whose resilience and ingenuity remain the foundation of regional development.

But beyond the celebration, May 22, 2026 calls for renewed mobilization. The future of the Lake Chad Basin will depend on the collective ability to strengthen regional solidarity, consolidate institutional achievements, and invest in sustainable solutions aligned with local realities and the aspirations of younger generations.

More than ever, LCBC must continue to embody a shared ambition: that of a restored, peaceful, resilient, and prosperous basin. A vision in which cooperation goes beyond principles to become a tangible reality serving the well-being of populations.

On this 62nd anniversary, let us reaffirm our shared commitment to preserving this vital heritage and to building, together, a sustainable future for the Lake Chad Basin.

Happy 62nd anniversary to the Lake Chad Basin Commission!

United around a shared slogan:

“Together for a stable, resilient, and prosperous Lake Chad Basin.”

By

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