

Lake Chad Basin Crisis: FAO Director-General talking points press conference 11 April Rome

An Ecological as well as Humanitarian Crisis- Lack of rural development generate and sustain conflicts (Lake Chad, Yemen, South Sudan, and Democratic Republic of Congo)

Context

The current globally high levels of food insecurity reflect a sustained lack of investment in rural development over the last 30 years that has generated and sustained the conflicts, which have pushed millions of people into hunger. **H. E. Kashim Shettima Governor of Borno State (2011- to date).**

Un Security Council Resolution 2349 (2017), Adopted 31 March 2017, Recognize[s] the interconnectedness of the challenges facing the Lake Chad Basin and the wider Sahel region and Calls upon Governments in the Region, including through the support of the international community, to support early recovery activities and long-term investment in vital services such as health care, education and agriculture to enhance longer-term recovery and resilience of populations, particularly for the areas with the most pressing need.

It has to be noted this is an ecological as well as a humanitarian Crises:-

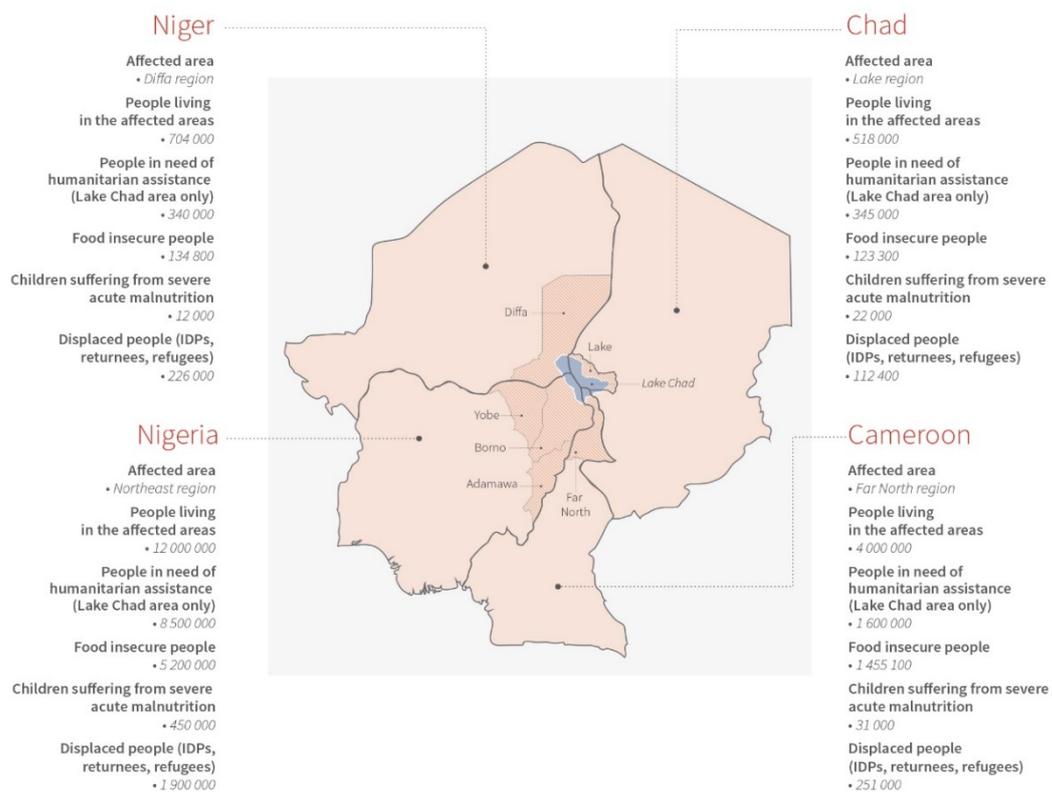
- **Ecological:** *Between 1963 and 2013, Lake Chad lost 90 percent of its water mass – with massive implications for populations living in these areas.*
- **Humanitarian:** *In northeastern Nigeria, conflict has forced an estimated 2.5 million people to abandon their homes and – predominantly agricultural – livelihoods. Across the Lake Chad Basin region, some 7 million people risk suffering from severe hunger during the lean season and require immediate food and livelihood assistance.*

These are the messages we want to get across to the international community:

1. **This conflict cannot be solved only with arms. This is a war against hunger and poverty in the rural areas of Lake Chad Basin.** We need to promote rural development.
2. A combination of food assistance and food production support is the only way to make any dent in the scale of hunger in the region. We are saying that emergency food assistance must be linked to agricultural support to save lives, protect livelihoods and build resilience.
3. Agriculture including livestock and fisheries can no longer be an afterthought. It is what produces food and what sustains the livelihoods of about 90 percent of the region's population.
4. We are approaching a critical time in the agricultural calendar. The main planting season, begins in May/June 2017 and provides an enormous opportunity to tackle the high levels of food insecurity in the Lake Chad region.
5. Failure to intervene now with agricultural livelihoods support will have a broad negative impact. The need for massive food assistance will continue through 2018. The scale of humanitarian interventions in the absence of investment this planting season will be too high.
6. There is a huge shortfall in international assistance to meet the demands of the coming growing season. Of the USD 62 million requested under the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan for Nigeria, FAO has so far received only about USD 12.5 million.

Background

“The situation we have now is largely due to the conflicts and armed groups that have devastated the lives and livelihoods across the whole of Lake Chad region. It is like an “opportunistic infection” which is largely taking advantage of an already weak body from underlying problems of environmental degradation, related droughts, low investment in rural development, poverty and limited employment and livelihood opportunities for young men and women. We need to work on the symptoms by restoring peace and treat the disease by making the body stronger. This is all about resilience” Jose Graziano da Silva 7th April 2017



What FAO is doing

More than 1.16 million people will receive assistance from FAO in the coming months across Lake Chad Basin.

Key activities include the distribution of cereal seeds, animal feed and the provision of cash transfers and veterinary care. This will enable displaced farmers and voluntary returnees to get a substantial harvest and replenish their food stocks, and to prevent animal losses among vulnerable herders.

FAO has developed FAO's Lake Chad Basin Response Strategy (2017-2019) to improve food security and nutrition and strengthen the resilience of vulnerable communities in the affected areas.

With a budget of USD 232 million – USD 191 million for northeastern Nigeria alone – required over the next three years, the Strategy targets 3 million people in the region, focusing on women and youth.

FAO's engagement in northeastern Nigeria

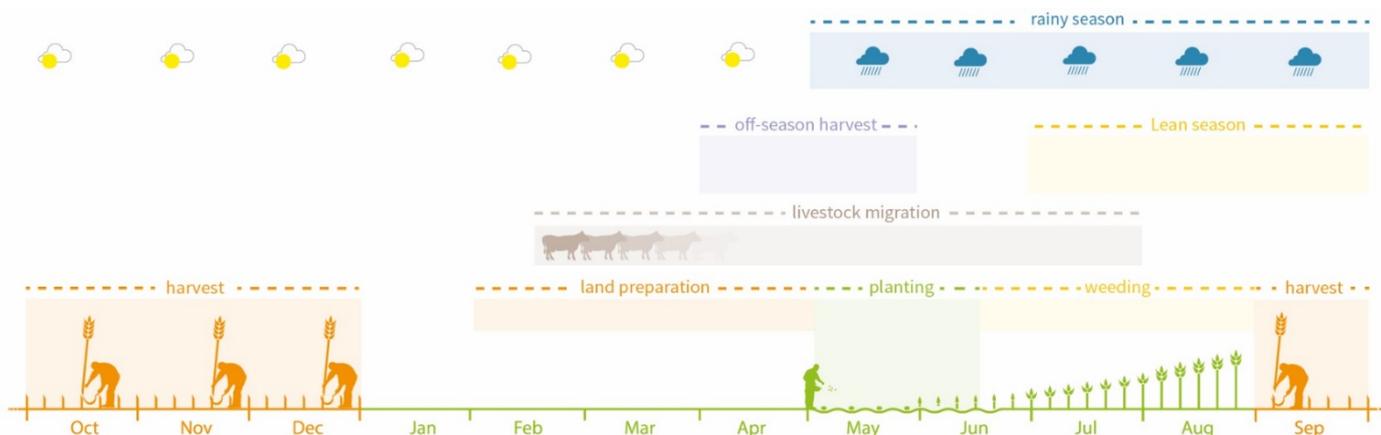
The FAO sub-office in Maiduguri covers both FAO's response and resilience activities as well as in the Food Security Sector Working Group.

FAO prioritizing getting seeds, fertilizers and tools into farmers' hands by May so they can plant.

If they miss this season, humanitarian costs will keep rising and rising into 2018.

To-date, FAO has sufficient funding to assist only 114,000 households (about 900 000 people). **48 percent of those targeted** – during the rainy season.

Pastoralists and fishers need to be considered fully in the planning. So far, FAO is supporting animal restocking for nearly 1 700 households out of a target of 30 500 households and vaccinating 105 850 animals. If internally displaced persons don't have their animals back, they will remain in the refugee camps.



FAO/WFP collaboration

FAO and WFP are working together during the May-October 2017 lean season through: (1) Emergency Food and agriculture assistance: Target 150 000 households; (2) Emergency food and livelihoods starter kits assistance (Food or Cash+ livelihoods): Target: 20 000 households; and (3) Development of local economies and markets: Target 50 000 IDPs and host communities.