

FIRST ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAKE CHAD BASIN

Abuja, Nigeria

11th - 12th April, 2022

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

1. The Lake Chad Basin Commission (LBCB) and the Governments of the Republics of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria convened the First Annual International Forum on the Development of the Lake Chad Region in Abuja, Nigeria, on the 11th and 12th of April, 2022, via the Lake Chad Recovery and Development Project (PROLAC) and the Multi-sectoral Crisis Recovery Project for North-Eastern Nigeria (MCRP).
2. The Annual Forum which brought together development participants, local and international actors, was convened to address the challenges of climate change and conflict, support economic recovery, repair the social contract, and address the needs of women, youth and the most vulnerable in the Lake Chad Region.
3. Some of those present at the Forum are the underlisted, including Development participants, Government representatives, academia and other stakeholders.

H.E. Yemi Osinbajo, Vice-President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

H.E. Babagana U. Zulum, Executive Governor of Borno State, Nigeria.

H.E. Midjiyawa Bakari, Governor of Far North Region, Cameroon.

Mr. Suleiman H. Adamu, Minister of Water Resources of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Mr. Muhammad Musa Bello, Minister of Federal Capital territory (FCT).

Hajiya Sadiya Umar Farouq, Minister of Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development.

Mr. Mohammed G. Alkali, Managing Director/CEO, NEDC.

Ambassador Mamman Nuhu, Executive Secretary of LCBC.

Mr Shubham Chaudhuri, Country Director, World Bank.

Prof Zakaria O. Ramadane, Chadian Center for Strategic Studies and Prospective Analysis: CETES, N'Djamena Chad.

Mr. Hycinth Banseka, Technical Director, Lake Chad Basin Commission.

Dr. Garba Sambo and Prof Mohammed Mala Daura, University of Maiduguri.

Dr. Amadou I. Bokoye, Physician environmental sciences and climate, Quebec, Canada.

Prof Florence Sylvestre, Paleo-climatologist, Director of Research IRD University of N'Djamena – Chad.

Prof. Maikorema Zakari, University Abdou Moumouni, Niamey.

Prof. Ibrahim Umara, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria .

Dr. ZAKINET DANGBET, Director of Research and Innovation/MESRI.

Dr. CHIKA C. ANIEKWE, Coordinator, RSS/LCBC.

Prof. Issa Saibou, University of Maroua, Cameroon.

Dr. Charline Range, Specialist of the Lake Chad, NGO GRET, Paris, France (In Virtual).

Dr. Maurice Vunobolki, Adamawa State MCRP Coordinator.

Mr. Mansour A. Djibrine, President National Youth Council of the Department of Logone and Chari, Cameroon and Mercy Corp, Nigeria.

Katiellou G ABDOU, Traditional Ruler, MAINE SOROA – Niger.

Moussa MBODOMI, Traditional Ruler, Amerom, Doudoum local Government, Ngouri, Tchad.

Dr. Seidik Abba, Journalist-Writer, Analyst of African news on several media, France.

Prof. Koussoumna Libaa, University of Maroua (Virtual) .

Prof. Brice SINSIN, University of d'Abomey Calavi, Benin.

Dr. Chetima Boukar, Expert in Climate Change Adaptation TGIZ/LCBC Project, (In virtual).

Na'Andi Maman Taher, Regional Coordinator of PRESIBALT.

Mr. Diawoye Konte, Coordinator of GEF/UNDP/LCBC/Project.

Alou Mahaman Tidjani, University Abdou Moumouni, Niamey.

Mr. Almoustapha Soumaila. Association for collective well-being and ecology, Niger.

Hélène Ronceray, Regional Coordinator of the RESILAC Project.

Dr Awat H. MAHAMAT, University of N'Djamena.

Prof. Ibrahim Baba Goni, University of Maiduguri.

Catherine Defontaine, World Bank (Virtual).

Mr Mohammed Danjuma, MD/CEO MCRP

Manuel Figueredo Thomson, World Bank (Virtual).

4. The LCBC and Government expressed their gratitude in their welcome remarks for the convening of this forum, which will address the challenges of insecurity, environmental, climate change, and socioeconomic challenges, in the Lake Chad Region.
5. The LCBC and Government desire that the recommendations developed during the forum will restore hope, livelihood and economic opportunities to citizens in the Lake Chad region, especially the most vulnerable.
6. The LCBC and Government highlighted the relevance of the states for the adoption of the regional stabilization strategy and expressed their gratitude for the exemplary cooperation between the government/technical and financial partners, World Bank, among others with the PROLAC project.

On the Opportunities and Challenges in the Lake Chad Region

7. The participants identified the lack of consistent and adequate biophysical and socioeconomical data to guide decision making and policies within the Lake Chad Region. Similarly, the lack of satellite imageries in analysing the spatiotemporal dynamics of the Lake Chad Basin. The participants urge the commission to bridge this gap to hasten the growth of this region.
8. The participants also expressed their concerns due to the lack of exhaustive studies to determine the environmental and associated impacts of water transfer from Congo-Oubangui-Sangha to Lake Chad. The participants urged the commission to undertake new studies to bridge the gap in the dearth of data on this identified issue.
9. The participants charged the commission to ensure that strategies developed by local populations should be adapted to the Lake Chad hydrological variabilities, especially mobility, multifunctional space and usage.
10. The participants note that there is a shared opportunity of a strong regional interdependencies and cross-border dynamics, and a young and vibrant youth who can act as a strong driver of economic growth in the region.

On Peace, Security and Development in the Region

11. The participants expresses deep concern over the deteriorating security situation in the region that has displaced millions of people and deprived them

of their livelihoods. The participants urged the established regional enablers to ensure they provide a suitable governance structure that will facilitate the implementation of the Regional Strategy for Stabilization and better the state and citizens relationship.

12. The participants acknowledged the impact of getting the insurgents to surrender their arms, however, there is need to intensify community engagements on the reintegration projects through an enhanced transitional justice system. Also, the participants urged the commission to consult with the repentant combatants on what vocational skill they would be interested in learning, rather than imposing one on them that they may never utilize.
13. In this same vein, the participants notes that it is important to adopt an endogenous response based on an inclusive and participatory approach within the region.
14. The participants also stress on the need for studies and researches to be transformed into concrete development actions that are implemented in the region.

On Local Governance, Social Cohesion and Agents of Resilience

15. The participants notes that the media can play a greater role in crisis management in the Lake Chad Basin. There is a need for better working synergy between journalists and the Defence and security forces. The participants urged that media learning exchange sessions between journalists and security forces be held regularly in the region.
16. The participants expressed their concern over the limited support for the youth in the Lake Chad Region and urged the commission to strengthen and intensify its engagement with the youth. The participants further stated that the youths should be involved in the process of governance and decision making.
17. The participants expressed their concern on the need to involve women and youth in the recovery and stabilization strategies in the Lake Chad Basin, as they can be effective in the implementation of this recovery and stabilization process.
18. Finally, the participants also noted the need to assess and evaluate the consequences of youth employment in the socio-economic development of the region.

On Solutions for climate resilience in the Lake Chad region

19. The participants recommended cultivation of short-cycle and drought-resistant varieties and the adoption of water conservation practices for producers. Also, the establishment of 2 or 3 generations of flood recession sorghum nurseries to reassure producers of the flood recession system due to imprecise of the rainy season.
20. The participants called for capacity building of farmers in agroforestry, use of manure and compost, fish farming, rice-fish farming. also, diversification to strengthen the adaptive capacities of the population through methods such as rainfed, flood recession and off-season farming).
21. The participants asked for Support for the development/strengthening of a BLT ecological monitoring system based on the preservation of ecosystems with consideration of CC and the gender aspect.
22. The participants called for strengthening and harmonization of the political, institutional and legal instruments of Member States for the adaptation of national strategies to regional strategic documents and development of Political and Legal Frameworks.
23. The participants called for increased awareness and participation of local actors/stakeholders in the sustainable management of natural resources of the BLT.
24. The participants called for increased involvement of universities and research centres in the management of BLT resources.
25. The participants called for cross-border cooperation mechanisms on NRM. the development of partnerships and mobilization of resources for structuring projects.
26. The participants called for the creation of incentive mechanisms to value ecosystem services for sustainable management of the ecosystems and livelihoods.

On Engaging citizens, women and youth and building social cohesion in the Lake Chad region

27. The participants noted that there should be increased empowerment and strengthening of the representation of local consultation committee members.
28. The participants recommended the encouragement of activities that promote citizen participation and debate.
29. The participants recommended an increased production of knowledge and local solutions to be prioritized in the development of methodologies.
30. The participants stated the need to support and improve the capacity of local authorities to deliver basic services and promote positive partnerships.
31. The participants called for engaging in activities that promotes inclusion and social cohesion of population in targeted territories through methods proposed by actors with proven expertise.
32. The participants called for increased consideration of Non-Governmental Organizations concerns on the peace components of the Triple Nexus.

On Data, Research and Development

33. The participants highlighted the need for the increased involvement of university and research institutions in the region in leading and managing data collection activities.
34. The participants recommended building capacity of students and locals on data collection across the region using different tools and techniques.
35. The participants called for the review of the “Land Use Act” to address the challenge of accessing lands for farming and pastoralist activities.

On the Drafting of the Forum Declaration

36. In this regard, all participants having observed the necessity for this forum have thus come to a series of recommendations:
 - a) To continue efforts to support the multinational joint force in order to win the fight against terrorism and ensure the return of peace and security to the areas affected by the crisis.
 - b) To invest in the capacity of local communities still playing a major role in implementing the region's development.

- c) To hold exchanges of experiences and support regarding the implementation of development projects in areas that are difficult to access and most exposed to insecurity.
 - d) To support traditional leaders during the restoration of trust between the populations and the government.
 - e) To support and build the capacity of civil society and communities to ensure better citizen engagement in governance.
 - f) Guarantee to involve women and youths in the decision-making process.
 - g) To detail the most systematic measure of practice and adaptive approach that will produce success in the region to address the challenges of climate change.
 - h) Improve access to data and information on adaptive climate change by developing the capacity of the local, national and regional institutions.
 - i) Support the local community with tools and technical skills to integrate more systematically into government planning.
 - j) Associate universities and research centers that collect and manage data to ensure sustainability.
 - k) To strengthen collaborations and cooperation between university and research institutions.
 - l) To take into considerations practices that have not been fruitful in the region.
 - m) Mandate the Lake Chad research group to consolidate the forum report and submit it to the president or to the governor of the Lake Chad Basin before the next forum is held.
37. The Draft which was adopted by all the participants of the forum brought to an end the successful deliberation and a charge to Niger Republic, who will host the next annual international forum for the Lake Chad Region.
38. At the end of their deliberations, the LCBC expressed their deep gratitude to the dignitaries, participants and participants who played a key role in this annual forum for the betterment of the countries and its citizens in the Lake Chad Region.

Done in Abuja, Nigeria, this 12th Day of April, 2022

THE LCBC