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HIGHLIGHTS

- Pledges of increased funding for the Lake Chad crisis at GA side event.
- IDPs move back to LGAs
- New Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator appointed

FIGURES

# people in need of humanitarian assistance	7 m
# IDPs	1.8 m
# of people facing acute food insecurity	4.5 m
# severe acute malnourished children in Borno state	250,000
# in Borno state in need of food assistance	3.1 m
# of refugees who have crossed into Cameroon, Chad and Niger	159,560

FUNDING

484 million
requested (US\$)

25% funded (as of 30 September 2016)



General Assembly side-event focuses on Lake Chad crisis

A high level side-event at the 71st UN General Assembly in September focused on the Lake Chad crisis bringing together governments, donors and regional organizations. The crisis, affects a total of nine million people in Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria where 6.3 million are food insecure and 2.6 million forced to flee their homes. Nigeria is the worst affected, with over two million displaced and in need of food, shelter, health, education, water and sanitation, and protection.

Scaling up

To meet these growing needs NGOs, the ICRC and UN agencies continue to scale up operations in the affected states in support of government mechanisms, to deliver much needed life-saving assistance. As Nigerian Armed Forces push out rebel forces, a limited number of previously insecure areas are becoming accessible, opening up access to communities. However, there are still areas where an unknown number of people are unreachable, trapped in rebel-held enclaves and who doubtless require humanitarian assistance.



In order to address the needs of both displaced people and host communities affected by the crisis, the Nigerian Humanitarian Response Plan for 2016 was revised, based on the most recent assessments. To meet the most urgent life-saving needs a sum of US\$484 million is required. At the 30 September just 25 per cent of the required amount was raised, resulting in a shortfall for the most immediate needs.

Funding pledges

Member States at the General Assembly meeting in New York including Belgium, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States pledged \$168 million in support of the scale up of operations. Beyond financial support, the governments of affected countries in the Lake Chad Basin and humanitarian partners pledged to strengthen collaboration to meet the needs of affected communities, provide longer term development assistance and address the root causes of the crisis.

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Return of IDPs

With at least 1.8 million¹ IDPs across the four most affected states in Nigeria's north-east and 1.4 million in Borno state alone, the Borno state government is moving towards returning people since the beginning of 2016. While some IDPs express a willingness to return, they are seeking assurances that measures are put in place to ensure safety in their places of return. Citizens also seek assurances for improvements in the provision of basic services such as education, health, WASH etc. and an enabling environment for the resumption of farming activities, free from the threat of violence. Although the state government has begun to undertake early recovery activities in some Local Government Areas (LGAs), it will take time before all the basic facilities and services will be in place to support a sustainable return.

Military operations

Military operations to clear the wards and villages of Boko Haram is ongoing and available information suggests that the LGA headquarter towns of Dikwa, Gamboru, Ngala, Konduga and Mafa are safe for people to return. It should be stressed that the vast majority of areas outside of newly-secured LGA headquarter towns are not considered sufficiently safe or secure to absorb the return of citizens.

The extensive damage caused by conflict leaves most LGA headquarter towns with weak capacity. Schools, health and WASH facilities and basic infrastructure require major rehabilitation or reconstruction. Government entities and international partners need to conduct in-depth assessments to identify immediate humanitarian and mid to longer term recovery requirements and to mobilise the required resources in order to better enable conditions for IDP return.

Basic needs for returning IDPs

While families are eager to return home and restart farming and livelihood activities, they will first and foremost descend on the LGA headquarter towns rather than more remote areas, placing increasing pressure on very limited facilities and public services. Given that the farming planting season is almost ended, citizens returning now won't be able to undertake any farming activities and will require substantial humanitarian assistance until at least the next harvest season.

There are concerns that if IDPs return to their communities and basic services are not available, or their basic needs met, they will once again return to Maiduguri where they will receive minimum assistance. Should this happen it will further exacerbate an already dire situation in the city.



OCHA/O. Fagan: Gwoza town in Borno state was razed to the ground at the height of the conflict. Local authorities are now rebuilding and with the help of the humanitarian community life is returning to normal.

Operational standards

To address the issues, the Protection Sector Working Group in collaboration with the recently established IDP Return Task Force has put together Operational Standards for the return of IDPs in new accessible areas in Borno state. This initiative seeks to provide guidance for Government and humanitarian partners to address critical issues concerning the planned and ongoing return of IDPs to newly accessible LGAs. Guiding Principles were also drafted where relevant state actors commit to involve IDPs through a consultative process in all stages of planning and implementation of their return. This embraces the different needs of women, men, children, elderly and disabled citizens.

¹ This is the latest figure from IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Round XI and based on accessible areas. However, not all areas were reached by the DTM and some areas are known to have both a sizeable displaced and host population.

Shifting attention away from south Borno could have disastrous consequences....

Food security must remain focused on south Borno

Responding to the call for a scale up in humanitarian response, INGOs have rallied and increased their operations across Nigeria's north-east. International NGO Mercy Corps recently set up operations with over 50 staff covering food security and early recovery, focusing on the most pivotal needs of people in south Borno.

Towns such as Damboa in south Borno have functional markets, but very few people can afford the food and non-food items on sale. The humanitarian community stepped in to support people with food distributions to reduce numbers showing acute malnutrition. While distributions helped stabilize Damboa's informal camps, without continuing and increasing support, a relapse is possible.

Should the response shift attention away from south Borno, disastrous longer-term consequences would develop as the north and east become increasingly more accessible. In response to the needs of at least 200,000 people, the NGO Mercy Corps is focusing its response on south Borno² to ensure its citizens are not left behind.

According to Ghilda Chrabieh, Mercy Corps' Director of Humanitarian Programs, "From our perspective on the ground, there is a critical need to focus on south Borno to ensure that communities can survive and recover. Food is one of the greatest needs, and we want to respond immediately and pave the way for recovery."



Credit: Mercy Corps/Tom Saater: With USAID support, a food cash voucher distribution in Biu, South Borno in September 2016.

For a third year in a row the security situation prevents local farmers accessing land to plant crops. As farmland access becomes increasingly more secure in the southern areas of Borno, there is increasing space to implement livelihood interventions enabling communities to regain their dignity and to feed themselves in future.

The current humanitarian crisis requires an increase in the support of NGOs and other humanitarian partners to help the people across Nigeria's north-east on the road to recovery.

There are manifold challenges and a steadfast focus is required until sustainable solutions are firmly in place for those whose lives are so badly affected by the humanitarian crisis, including the people of south Borno.

Scenario-building exercise reinforces robustness of Nigeria's north-east Response

The scale up of operations in response to the current humanitarian situation was the subject of a scenario-building workshop in Borno's capital, Maiduguri during September. The workshop organized by the INGO Forum and OCHA included participants from government including NEMA and SEMA and UN agencies.

INGO Forum Coordinator, Mr Drake Ssenyange was keen to point out that, "Rather than an attempt to predict the future, scenarios are a description of situations that could arise over the next few months."

The exercise is intended to support planning by anticipating needs and related interventions; provide a framework for improved monitoring; promote preparedness activities among stakeholders; and provide early warning. The scenarios will also help

The exercise is intended to support planning by anticipating needs...

² Including the following LGAs: Biu, Damboa, Hawul and Kwaya Kusar.

inform Nigeria's Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and INGO interventions and contingency planning.

ACAPS, a Geneva-based project whose mission is to enable crisis responders better understand and address the world's disasters, facilitated the workshop.

Variables

Some of the key variables which could influence the scenarios over the next nine months include: insecurity, population movement, a decrease in household capital, humanitarian organizations' ability to deliver and the capacity of the government to provide basic services.

"Preparation and clarity is required on what we hope to achieve, should the worst case scenario develop. We discussed the different combinations of these factors and developed them into four plausible scenarios. Each scenario would require a different but targeted response," continued Ssenyange.

While the scenarios consider possible developments from October 2016 until the end of June 2017, any impact on access to basic needs will likely be felt by households until the main harvest in late 2017.

The full scenario document will be published online at www.acaps.org in early October.



Credit: ACAPS/Nic Parham September, 2016
Scenario-building workshop.

Humanitarian Country Team in Nigeria gets a new leader

"The situation in Nigeria is grave and presents challenges for all humanitarian workers..."

October sees the appointment of Mr. Peter Lundberg, a Swedish national as the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator (DHC) leading the humanitarian response to its next level.

The former head of Sida's emergency unit in Stockholm is taking over from Mr. Munir Safiieldin who departed at the end of September.

"The situation in Nigeria is grave and presents challenges for all humanitarian workers as I experienced on a previous mission to the area", said Lundberg. "I look forward to enhancing cooperation with the government, fostering closer ties with our partners, most especially the NGO community, and leading humanitarian efforts to find durable solutions to the current crisis."



As operations scale up with more experienced humanitarian specialists coming on board, the centre of the response is moving to Borno's state capital, Maiduguri. The DHC will be located in the OCHA office there.

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