

HIGHLIGHTS

- International action urged to ward off looming famine in north-east Nigeria.
- Mounting incidents of armed violence worsen the Central African Republic's long-running crisis.
- Election risk preparedness and lessons learnt from The Gambia's crisis.
- Post-World Humanitarian Summit policy shift towards collective preparedness and response to alleviate human suffering begins to take shape.

KEY FIGURES

Severely food insecure people in the Lake Chad Basin	6.7M
Amount pledged at the 24 February Oslo conference on Nigeria and the Lake Chad region	\$672M
Proportion of the Central African Republic's population displaced by conflict	20%

REGIONAL FUNDING UPDATE

US\$3.8 billion requested in 2017

10% funded



In this issue

- LCB crisis: action urged to avert famine P.1
- Huge needs amid fresh clashes in CAR P.3
- Gambia's post-poll crisis response P.4
- Shaping up the *New Way of Working* P.6
- Regional epidemics highlights P.7
- Regional funding update P.8

Lake Chad crisis: quick action needed to avert famine

Tens of thousands of people are threatened by famine in parts of north-eastern Nigeria, which alongside other regions in neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and Niger are stricken by a long-running conflict that has displaced 2.4 million people and left 6.7 million critically food insecure.



A woman winnows cereal at a site for the displaced outside Damaturu town in Nigeria's north-east. Credit: OCHA/O.Bakano

In Nigeria's north-east alone, 4.7 million people are struggling with extreme food shortages, and in the worst-affected and least accessible areas of Borno and Yobe states, severe forms of hunger have been registered, with more than 40,000 people estimated to be experiencing famine-like conditions.

UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O'Brien, on 10 March urged international action to assist the millions of people grappling with hunger and prevent the situation from worsening.

"An immediate injection of funds plus safe and unimpeded access are required to enable partners to avert a catastrophe, otherwise many people will predictably die from hunger, livelihoods will be lost, and political gains that have been hard-won over the last few years will be reversed," Mr. O'Brien said in a briefing to the Security Council on the threats of famine or declared famine in parts of

Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen.

Timely funding

In the Lake Chad Basin, what began as a protection crisis has also become a major food and nutrition emergency and one of the world's most severe crises. Nearly half of the

Sustained and timely financial support is needed to maintain the scale-up in operations desperately needed in the north-east of Nigeria

US\$1.5 billion needed for humanitarian assistance in the region in 2017 is earmarked for food assistance (US\$645 million). The bulk of those struggling with alarming levels of food insecurity are in Nigeria's north-east.

Oslo conference

At the 24 February Oslo conference on Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin region, 14 donors pledged US\$458 million for assistance in 2017 and an additional US\$214 million was announced for 2018 and beyond.

Humanitarian organizations have ramped up operations over the past year, but persistent insecurity and funding shortfalls remain the major obstacles to adequate relief aid.

“Sustained and timely financial support is needed to maintain the scale-up in operations desperately needed in the north-east of Nigeria,” Peter Lundberg, the UN deputy humanitarian coordinator for Nigeria, said at the Oslo conference.

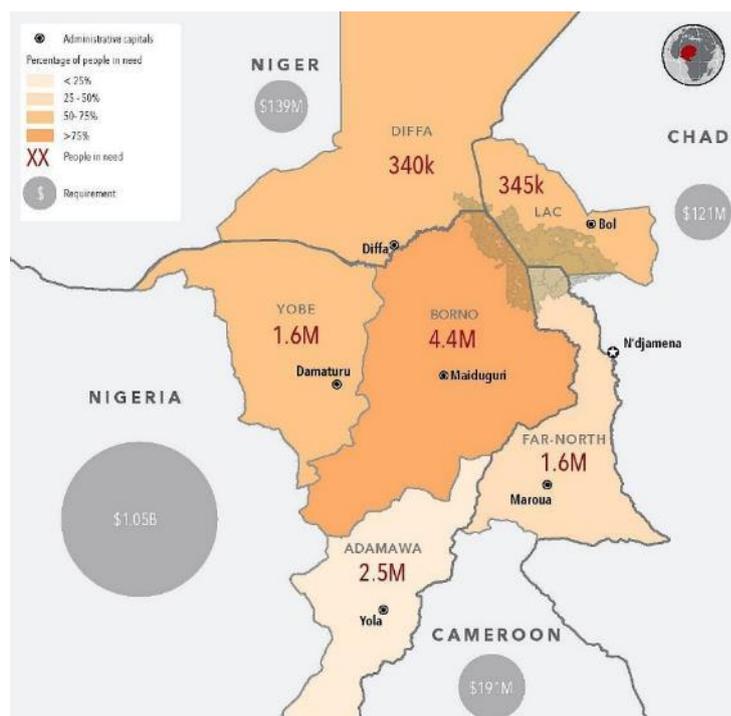
Supporting the mainstay

Ahead of the May planting season across the region, timely funding will be critical in shoring up agriculture and ease the burden of hunger through the June - August lean season.

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood of up to 90 per cent of rural households in the Lake Chad Basin. Communities here continue to suffer Boko Haram attacks. The raids and destruction have decimated livelihoods, and those who have fled the violence are struck by adversity in displacement sites and other areas of refuge.

With farming, trade and movement disrupted, prices of staple foods in most markets have risen in comparison with the past five-year average: by 50 - 150 percent for maize and by about 76 - 204 per cent for sorghum, according to FAO. Ahead of this year's planting season, the agency is underscoring the importance of providing tools, seeds and livestock in time to help stave off a possible deterioration of the crisis.

In Nigeria, FAO has budgeted US\$20 million which is needed by mid-March at the latest, as distribution of inputs is to take place between April and June. For the 2017 main season, FAO is targeting 1.35 million people in Nigeria to be assisted through the distribution of fast-maturing nutrient-rich cereal and pulse seeds, fertilizers, seed production assistance, post-harvest storage, vegetable and fruit production, food processing and agricultural infrastructure rehabilitation.



People in need of humanitarian assistance and funding requirements for the affected Lake Chad Basin countries

Missing the upcoming season starting in May is likely to result in a serious protracted livelihoods crisis with consequences stretching into 2018

Aid agencies are collaborating to provide host communities and the displaced with food aid and agricultural support to restore and protect livelihoods and farming assets for food production

Collaboration

To meet the immediate and longer-term food security needs, emergency food and farming assistance is being stepped up across the region. Aid agencies in the food security sector are collaborating to provide host communities and the displaced with food aid and agricultural support to restore and protect livelihoods and farming assets for food production.

In Nigeria's north-east, for instance, WFP and FAO are conducting joint response to reduce food consumption gaps and needs, treat and prevent acute malnutrition and rebuild the livelihoods of vulnerable affected populations during the lean season by combining WFP's in-kind food assistance and cash-based transfers with FAO's provision of seeds, tools and fertilizers as well as small-scale livelihoods starter kits.

Missing the upcoming season starting in May is likely to result in a serious protracted livelihoods crisis with consequences stretching into 2018.

Fresh clashes amid CAR's huge needs

An increase in violence since September 2016 has deepened the Central African Republic's (CAR) protracted crisis. More than 100,000 people have been displaced afresh, bringing to 402,240 the total number of internally displaced persons.

In recent months, clashes between armed groups have erupted several times in areas around the main road linking the central Bambari and Bria towns. Since Bria fell into the hands of armed groups in November 2016, clashes between rival militia have driven civilians from several towns and villages, restricted movement and is deepening vulnerabilities.



Several attacks and clashes between armed groups and security incidents have been reported since September 2016 mainly in Ouham Pende, Nana Gribizi and Ombella Mpoko prefectures.

One in two people requires assistance

Humanitarian needs remain critically high: one in five Central Africans is currently displaced within the country or across the borders and some 2.2 million people, or half the entire population, need humanitarian assistance.

Thirty-one per cent of worldwide security incidents reported against NGOs in 2016 were in CAR. Since the departure of the French troops in October 2016, MINUSCA's capacity to respond to armed violence at local level has been stretched

With half of its population requiring humanitarian assistance, CAR has the world's highest humanitarian case load per capita

Despite the rising needs, humanitarian funding has been on a downward trend over the past three years. At a recent meeting with donors in Yaoundé, Minister of Humanitarian, Social Affairs and National Reconciliation, Virginie Baikoua and the acting Humanitarian Coordinator, Michel Yao, called on the international community to not let the CAR's crisis slip off their radar.

The worsening security has hobbled humanitarian operations. Attacks on premises and robberies of equipment have forced some aid organizations to suspend or cease operations. According to the International NGO Safety Organization, 31 per cent of worldwide security incidents reported against NGOs in 2016 were in CAR.

Funding shortfall

Humanitarian funding reached its lowest level in 2016, with the US\$531.5-million humanitarian response plan funded at only 37 per cent. Some US\$399.5 million are required this year. So far, just five per cent of the amount has been mobilised. With half of its population requiring humanitarian assistance, CAR has the world's highest humanitarian case load per capita.

In January, the Central Emergency Response Fund allocated US\$6 million to partially cover the urgent humanitarian needs of newly displaced people with regards to food security. The CAR Humanitarian Fund has triggered its emergency reserve mechanism on two occasions. The first in December 2016 with US\$1 million in support of the response to the food crisis in Bria. The second time in January this year to address complementary needs such as provision of shelter and non-food items, camp management, water, sanitation and hygiene, logistics, protection and health.

The humanitarian community continues to advocate mobilization of additional funds to cover the remaining needs.

Mobilising for The Gambia's post-poll crisis

The Gambia's post-election crisis prompted humanitarian organizations to speedily build up a response plan as thousands of people fled the capital Banjul to their villages or across the border to Senegal. With the crisis averted, challenges that arose during the formulation of response strategies provide valuable lessons.

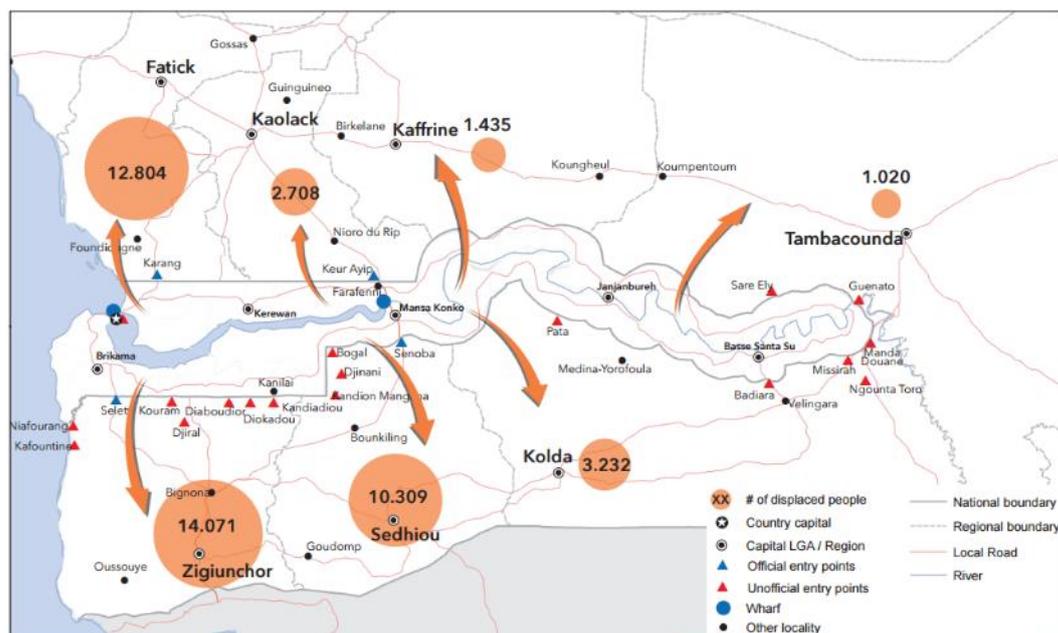
Two months ahead of the December 2016 presidential poll, in which long-time leader Yahya Jammeh lost to opposition candidate and now President Adama Barrow, humanitarian partners held an election preparedness workshop to be better placed to respond to any emergency.

Response challenges

However, as the crisis over the disputed poll result dragged on with civilians fleeing in larger numbers in fear of violence, aid workers crafting a response plan were confronted with some challenges: critical data such as geographical coordinates of medical infrastructures or schools were not readily available; not all partners had access to a consolidated list of relief items stocks available in-country and the mapping of critical infrastructures and of offices and warehouses of humanitarian organisations and agencies was not yet accessible.

The inter-organisation emergency preparedness and response group gathering key emergency responders from UN agencies, the Red Cross and NGOs started to quickly collect and compile this critical data when the post-election crisis worsened. In record time those involved in emergency health from the Ministry of Health, the Red Cross, the UN and NGOs drafted a list of critical items needed for the emergency wards and worked with OCHA to map these health facilities.

The UN has committed to engage in a coordinated manner at the national, regional and international levels to ensure timely and targeted support to The Gambia



Population displacement as of 19 January 2017. Most those who fled the country in fear of violence have returned home.

In Senegal, the regional and national emergency preparedness groups drew up a list of organisations, their activities and areas of operation, compiled information on available resources, outlined the humanitarian coordination strength and gaps and set information sharing mechanisms. Prior to these activities, three inter-agency missions evaluated the Government's and the humanitarian partners' readiness in the regions bordering The Gambia.

As it turned out, a regional diplomatic and military push helped avert violence, and with the easing of tensions, those displaced began to return home as did the president-elect.

Recovering from state of fragility

In February, a UN inter-agency mission deployed to The Gambia to assess key challenges to peace, development and human rights and identify potential areas of support based on the priorities of the new Government. After extensive consultations with relevant actors, the mission found that damage to public institutions and the social fabric is deeply entrenched and requires an extraordinary effort to recover and to build the foundations for a democratic republic that respects the rule of law and meets the security and development needs of the population.

The new Government has inherited an economy in dire crisis with massive debt (110 per cent of GDP), depressed reserves (0.8 months of importation), and a large fiscal deficit. Without macro-economic stability, the Government will not be able to address the urgent development needs. With nearly half of its population living below the poverty line of US\$1.25 per day and almost 30 per cent of its active labour force unemployed, The Gambia is among the poorest countries in the world. Moreover, unemployment is highest for the youth (39 per cent).

Humanitarian needs persist

Eight per cent of the population (about 157,000 people, most of them children with moderate acute malnutrition, pregnant and nursing women) are currently classified as moderately or severely food insecure, and require food assistance. The 2016 Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis indicate that the food security has deteriorated since 2011.

Successful regional diplomatic efforts headed off a full-blown crisis in The Gambia. But this outcome should serve as a reminder that good humanitarian data preparedness is critical

Gambians make up the second largest contingent of migrants from West Africa despite the country's small population size

Malnutrition among children under five, as well as pregnant and lactating women, and a fragile health system associated with high maternal morbidity and mortality, are of particular concern. Other challenges highlighted relate to political, security and human rights concerns, whose consequences have pushed many Gambians across borders in search of better life. According to some estimates, Gambians make up the second largest contingent of migrants from West Africa despite the country's small population size.

The UN has committed to engage in a coordinated manner at the national, regional and international levels to ensure timely and targeted support to The Gambia. This year, the country incorporated humanitarian response plans into the UN development assistance framework.

New Way of Working taking shape

Some seventy humanitarian and development partners from across West and Central Africa gathered in Dakar in January to discuss ways to set in motion the policy shifts arising from the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) to humanitarian and development operations in the region.

The workshop hosted by OCHA's Regional Office for West and Central Africa on 18 and 19 January was the first of a series of policy dialogues organized in collaboration with UNDP and with the participation of donors, civil societies, UN agencies, NGOs and academia to implement the *New Way of Working* overwhelmingly called for during the WHS meeting in Istanbul in 2016. The ambition is to



Participants at the 18 - 19 January discussions in Dakar. Credit: OCHA/I.Brandau

collectively revise the 'business as usual' approach to better meet people's immediate needs, but also transcend the long-standing divide between humanitarian and development actors, and sustainably lessen needs by reducing people's risks and vulnerabilities overtime.

In a region where crises are often predictable, participants called for more integration of the large array of existing flagship risk measurement and forecasting tools, and better linkages between existing analysis and decision-making

Integrating mechanisms for shared response

In Dakar, partners committed to articulate their work around achieving collective outcomes which build on the comparative advantages of a range of actors. There was recognition that doing so will require adapting their planning, coordination, operational and financing models to deliver on those shared outcomes. Participants reiterated that shared analysis of risks, threats and vulnerability must be the basis for better joint planning, and called for the relevant coordination platforms to enable discussions across partners and sectoral silos. Across the region, several steps have already been taken that lend themselves to advancing the *New Way of Working* – notably in Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chad, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal where Governments, humanitarian and development actors are increasingly aligning their planning and response models.

Policy shift cannot be achieved without alignment or better complementarity of short- and long-term financing instruments

In a region where crises are often predictable, participants called for more integration of the large array of existing flagship risk measurement and forecasting tools, and better linkages between existing analysis and decision-making. More solid partnerships with Governments and local authorities are pivotal in achieving this. Exploring ways to boost the sustainability of operations, partners voiced the need to trigger greater shifts in financing, coordination, capacity development, and partnerships of local actors to ensure more nationally-led responses.

Participants reiterated that the policy shift cannot be achieved without alignment or better complementarity of short and long-term financing instruments, including innovative financing tools; shifting from fragmented project funding to predictable mid-term financing for collective outcomes; local capacities; or through partnerships with development banks.

A detailed summary of the two-day discussions as well a suggested list of 30 operational recommendations put forth by the group is available in the report of the policy dialogue [here](#).

Regional epidemics highlights

Necrotizing cellulitis erupts in Sao Tomé and Príncipe

An outbreak of necrotizing cellulitis - a rare infection that causes skin decay - was reported to WHO on 24 January. Cases have been recorded since September 2016. As of 5 March, 1,421 cases and nine deaths from associated pathologies had been reported in all of the country's seven districts. WHO has activated Grade 2 emergency response which entails moderate operational response primarily in the form of technical assistance and deployment of a multidisciplinary team. Verification of the cause and mode of transmission are crucial in guiding control measures.

Hepatitis E in Chad

Hundreds of people could die in south-eastern Chad as a months-long outbreak of hepatitis B worsens, MSF warned on 9 February, recording 70 cases and 11 deaths since September. Some 885 people in the Salamat region have been treated for symptoms of jaundice, which can indicate hepatitis E. Most patients are likely to be suffering from hepatitis E, the aid group said. The death toll from the outbreak could be higher due to cases which may not have been treated in health facilities, according to WHO.

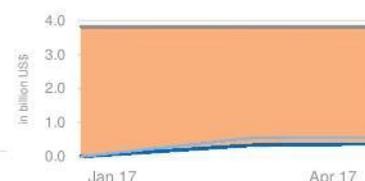
Outbreak of fever in Cameroon's Far North region

An eruption of fever and skin rash has sickened 43 children and caused 16 deaths in Cameroon's Far North region since the start of the year. The cases are mainly infants younger than three years and reported in six health districts in the region. Symptoms include persistent fever, skin lesions and anaemia. Treatment, increase of surveillance and active search of patients within the communities are being undertaken as part of the response.

Regional Funding Overview (as of 6 April 2017)

Figures in US\$ ■ Plan Funding ■ Unmet Requirement ■ Outside Plan Funding

TOTAL REQUIREMENT	US\$ 3.82 billion
TOTAL FUNDING	US\$ 367 million
UNMET REQUIREMENT	US\$ 3.45 billion
FUNDING OUTSIDE PLANS	US\$ 201 million



15% including funds received outside the Plans

2017 Humanitarian Response Plans

Cameroon	CAR	Chad	DRC	Mali	Niger	Nigeria	Burkina Faso	Mauritania	Senegal	Sahel
----------	-----	------	-----	------	-------	---------	--------------	------------	---------	-------

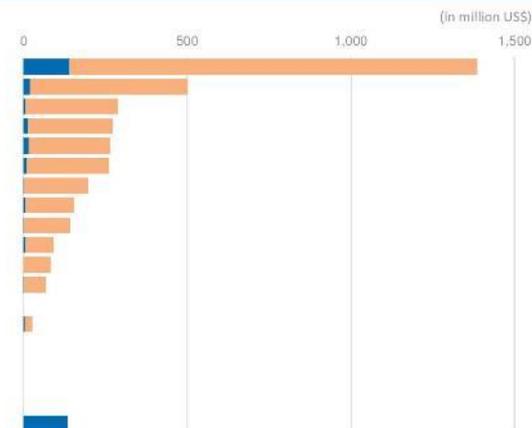
2017 Humanitarian Work Plans

FUNDING BY COUNTRY

Location	Requirement	Plan Funding	Pledge	Plan Coverage	Outside Plan Funding	Total Funding
Burkina Faso	61,089,000	636,000	-	1.0%	11,544,565	12,180,565
Cameroon	309,643,212	52,816,552	-	17.1%	1,172,634	53,989,186
CAR	399,500,000	22,318,240	-	5.6%	29,877,983	52,196,223
Chad	588,608,263	4,310,370	-	0.7%	27,374,574	31,684,944
DRC	748,052,204	29,551,037	-	4.0%	17,943,589	47,494,626
Mali	293,098,319	20,502,647	-	7.0%	21,952,856	42,455,503
Mauritania	74,500,000	1,152,615	-	1.5%	8,740,756	9,893,371
Niger	271,346,996	95,475,683	-	35.2%	20,646,623	116,122,306
Nigeria	1,054,431,494	140,560,931	2,625,000	13.3%	59,389,008	199,949,939
Senegal	15,808,722	-	-	0.0%	2,536,841	2,536,841

FUNDING BY CLUSTER

Cluster	Requirement	Plan Funding	Plan Coverage
Food Security	1,385,803,024	141,410,716	10.2%
Nutrition	501,487,523	20,029,144	4.0%
Multi-Sector For Refugees	287,308,209	7,016,047	2.4%
Protection	271,975,505	14,800,377	5.4%
Health	264,510,164	16,237,057	6.1%
Water Sanitation Hygiene	260,153,387	10,943,841	4.2%
Education	195,821,183	2,104,005	1.1%
Shelter and NFI	152,749,710	6,477,314	4.2%
Logistics	140,471,151	3,184,366	2.3%
Coordination	91,472,358	6,540,807	7.2%
Early Recovery	81,829,220	28,701	0.0%
Household Items and NFI	68,429,470	1,848,628	2.7%
Livelihoods and Com. Stabilisation	49,000,000	-	-
Non-sectoral Refugee Response	26,256,992	3,916,976	14.9%
Multipurpose Cash Assistance	13,200,000	-	-
Camp Coordination and Camp Mgt	11,560,000	-	-
Emergency Preparedness	8,203,553	-	-
Emergency Telecommunications	5,846,761	-	-
Cluster not Specified	-	132,786,096	-



DONORS AND RECIPIENTS

TOP 10 DONORS: 529,171,919 contributed

Donor	Contribution	Pledge
ECHO	194,638,697	-
USA, Government of	125,230,011	-
CERF	64,676,237	-
WFP	36,734,916	-
United Kingdom, Government of	23,992,985	-
Sweden, Government of	22,675,979	-
(blank)	19,339,105	-
Germany, Government of	17,615,828	-
Japan, Government of	15,808,474	-
Denmark, Government of	8,459,687	-

TOP 10 RECIPIENTS: 322,704,717 received

Recipient	Contribution	Pledge
WFP	200,192,926	-
UNICEF	37,843,746	-
UNHCR	22,704,462	-
FAO	17,116,242	-
WHO	10,111,368	-
(blank)	9,578,538	-
Save the Children	8,049,601	-
ACF - Spain	5,832,449	-
DRC Humanitarian Fund	5,647,165	-
UNFPA	5,628,220	-

Source: Financial Tracking Service, <http://fts.unocha.org>