

West and Central Africa Regional IASC Summary of discussions

Thursday 6 September 2018, 09:30-11:00
OCHA ROWCA Conference Room



OCHA

Regional Office for
West and Central Africa

Participants:

ALIMA, ACF, CaLP, COOPI, Danish Red Cross, ECHO, Helen Keller International, ICRC, ICVA, IOM, IRC, NRC, OCHA, Save the Children, Search for Common Ground, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women, U.S. Embassy, WFP, WHO, World Vision

1. Introduction

OCHA highlighted that since the last IASC meeting held on 2 July, another Ebola outbreak had been declared in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo. The volatile security environment and access restraints made the containment of this outbreak particularly challenging. However, the Government of the DRC continued to show strong leadership and was heavily supported by WHO and other partners. OCHA ROWCA had deployed four colleagues and was following the situation closely.

Floods in and around Monrovia this year had affected more than 50,000 persons. Response efforts had been mobilized quickly at the national level, with the government contributing more than US\$170,000. Little outside support had been required. OCHA also informed the group about its recent support to contingency planning in Cameroun.

2. Debriefing on the High-Level Conference on the Lake Chad Region

WFP and OCHA de-briefed on the High-Level Conference on the Lake Chad Region co-hosted by Germany, Nigeria, Norway and the United Nations on 3 and 4 September in Berlin. The Conference allowed national and international partners to recommit to work together to address the humanitarian needs and build the resilience of the over 17 million people still affected by the regional crisis, and to identify ways of strengthening the collective response. The conference was considered to have been highly successful, building on progress made since Oslo I. The conference highlighted the regional dimension, the crucial role of national and local actors, cross-border cooperation and ownership at all levels. Participants included ministers of all four LCB countries, governors from the Lake Chad region and the Humanitarian Coordinators of Cameroun, Niger and Nigeria. International, national and local NGOs and civil society organizations working in the region were actively represented and made their voices heard.

The conference clearly proved the added value of taking a multi-dimensional and regional approach to the crisis. The presence and interventions of both UNDP and OCHA principals also sent a strong signal to pursue this approach. Their upcoming joint visit to the region (Chad and Nigeria) in early October will build on this.

This renewed commitment was fully matched by the financial engagement. 17 Member States, the European Commission, CERF, the UN Peacebuilding Fund, the African Development Bank and the World Bank announced US\$ 2.17 billion in grants, three times the amount pledged in Oslo. This amount includes funding for both humanitarian and peacebuilding / development activities. The humanitarian envelope of just above one billion exceeds the pledges made in Oslo. In addition to this support, multilateral financial institutions (African Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank and World Bank) announced US\$ 467 million in concessional loans.

Participants stressed the importance of the pledges being translated into concrete contributions. OCHA will monitor the implementation of the pledges and is engaging with donors in Geneva. OCHA expressed its

readiness to share developments in this regard with the group regularly, to allow group members to engage with donors also at regional level, if deemed necessary. Details about the donors and the amounts pledged can be found [online](#).

There had been a strong consensus at the conference that the humanitarian crisis, despite improvements, remains acute and will require a sustained humanitarian response. The crucial importance of strengthening the protection of civilians and enhancing protection against gender-based violence, had been highlighted throughout the conference. A coherent, multi-year approach was needed to integrate all available instruments to tackle the protection crisis and the root causes of the conflict and pave the way for sustainable and resilient development of the region.

Upon inquiry, the group was informed that issues such as militarization of certain areas, politicization of the crisis, especially with regards to elections, and access constraints had also been discussed at the conference. While access issues due to security concerns remain, it is expected that there will be more clarity with regards to remaining pockets of unassisted vulnerable people as different hubs are starting to function in field locations. Meanwhile, it was underlined that relocations of IDPs need to be monitored closely to ensure they are transparent, voluntary and safe.

Participants watched the opening video of the Lake Chad Berlin conference, available online in [English](#) and [French](#).

3. Update on the situation in the Sahel

Since the end of June, the conditions in West Africa have in general been favourable, allowing areas that had experienced anomalous dryness since April/May to recover. However, concern was expressed over delays of the start of the rainy season in the western Sahel (below-average vegetation), especially in the Senegal-West Mali belt, as well as the early end of the rainy season in other locations, and the potential important impact this might have on the outlook for 2019. It was pointed out that outlooks and response readiness indicated by governments should be met with caution and relevant agencies and organizations should be involved in assessments.

WFP and OCHA recalled that food security, nutrition and agriculture agencies, partner organizations and governments had worked together in a timely manner in the face of the 2018 crisis, based on information by Cadre Harmonisé. While challenges remained, visits to different Sahel countries showed a positive response overall and WFP is currently reaching more than 2.5 million people with in-kind and cash assistance.

It was agreed to update the key messages on the Sahel in view of the end of the lean season, including information on the following:

- Analysis on forecasts and actual records
- Information about collective actions undertaken to mitigate the crisis
- Response figures in areas such as nutrition and food security and people reached
- Financial resources invested into the response
- Actions necessary in terms of recovery by the end of 2018
- Outlook and preparedness activities required for 2019
- More information about transhumance and actions necessary to mitigate conflicts between farmers and herders

Participants agreed that special attention should be paid to Chad, considering the country is hit by multiple crises (nutrition, food security, health, economic, security). The joint visit of the principals of UNDP and OCHA to Chad and Nigeria was welcomed in this regard. Furthermore, it was stressed that preventive measures, in all relevant sectors, and activities on livelihood were required to avoid high numbers of people affected.

It was agreed to invite the recently appointed Special Adviser to the Secretary General for the Sahel, Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, to an upcoming IASC meeting for an exchange with the humanitarian community in Dakar.

In general, it was highlighted that the Sahel received a lot of attention at the moment and that this needed to be sustained. ECHO informed that a new group of donors for the Sahel had met for a first time at directors' level in Brussels on 5 September, in an effort to support the Sahel region, and specifically the resilience agenda.

Action Points:

- OCHA will circulate an updated version of the joint Sahel key messages for feedback. Participants were encouraged to share information about prevention capacities as well as key figures.

4. Update on the UN Strategic Review in Central African Republic

OCHA briefed on the recent Independent Strategic Review of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission. While the review was independent, representatives of UN departments and agencies took part as advisors, with the humanitarian partners being represented by ROWCA's Head of Office.

It was noted that important achievements have been made in CAR since the 2013-2014 crisis and that the deployment of MINUSCA in September 2014 has saved countless lives and contributed to preventing what could have become a rapid descent into widespread violence. Many challenges nevertheless remain, and insecurity and lack of basic social services and livelihood opportunities continue to drive high levels of vulnerability and acute needs for life-saving protection and humanitarian assistance. It is estimated that 2,5 million people, half of the population, are in need of humanitarian assistance. Following a significant increase in violence and displacement in 2017, including in areas that had so far been spared, the number of internally displaced is higher than it has ever been, with a quarter of Central Africans currently displaced within the country (654,000 by end of June 2018) and to neighboring countries, mainly Cameroon, Chad, DRC and the Republic of Congo (584,000 by end of June 2018). Funding of the Humanitarian response plan has followed a decreasing trend since 2016 while needs have been increasing. In line with recent UN reform measures for peacekeeping, discussion during the review had focused on the primacy of politics, ensuring a more people-centered focus, partnerships and protection of civilians, as well as 'reaching those furthest behind'.

5. Cash in 2019 response planning

CaLP Regional Director, Ms. Nathalie Cissokoho, provided an update on the latest discussion in the regional Cash Working Group. She pointed out that there continues to be room for expanding cash interventions as part of humanitarian operations in West and Central African region. She highlighted that guidance on how to integrate multi-purpose cash in the cluster system is still being discussed. Participants were requested to encourage their country teams to engage with the Cash Working Groups and to integrate cash modalities within the frameworks of the various HRPs from the outset. (See [power point presentation](#).)

6. AOB

1. Save the Children informed the group about its second global annual report entitled "End of Childhood: The Many Faces of Exclusion". The report, which had been launched in June, takes a close look at the events that threaten children's lives around the world and highlights some key threats to children, including conflict, poverty and discrimination against girls. West African countries feature very heavily at the bottom of the report's corresponding index. The executive summary of the report and its index, as well as the West and Central Africa Regional Summary (in French and English) can be found in the meeting material folder.
2. UNHCR informed participants about the regional protection conference on the Lake Chad Basin to take place in Abuja on 31 October and 1 November.

3. NEXT IASC Meeting: Regular meetings will be held on every other month and ad-hoc meeting based on the necessity. The next regular meeting will be held in November.