



Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

## **LAKE CHAD BASIN: AN OVERLOOKED CRISIS IN AN OVERLOOKED REGION**

(New York, 25 September 2015) – The crisis in the Lake Chad Basin is deepening with evermore serious humanitarian consequences. Despite this, the crisis has been largely overlooked.

Violence related to the Boko Haram insurgency in the Lake Chad Basin has displaced 2.5 million people from their homes. Some 2.3 million of these are internally displaced. In addition, communities already stressed by drought and flooding struggle to host displaced people.

Many of the displaced families have been forced to relocate multiple times. Many have walked hundreds of kilometres - from Nigeria to Cameroon, Chad and Niger - in the most appalling conditions.

Up to 80 per cent of people displaced have sought refuge with already extremely poor host communities. This is taking a toll on the communities' livelihoods whose resources were already stretched. Insecurity has prevented farming, fishing and cross-border trade. According to some estimates, there has been an 80 per cent decrease in business activity in regions affected by violence, making communities even more vulnerable.

The crisis is having an acute impact on women and children, who are being abducted, abused, raped, exploited, trafficked, and forced to work as porters and lookouts. Children as young as six years old have been used as suicide bombers.

The sharp increase in attacks by Boko Haram has uprooted 500,000 children, bringing the total number of children on the run in northeast Nigeria and neighbouring countries to over 1.4 million. Many of these children are now out of school.

Droughts and floods hit the Lake Chad Basin repeatedly. Malnutrition and disease outbreaks hover at emergency levels. Some 5.5 million people do not have enough to eat, or are unable to obtain nutritious foods. Cholera is a regular threat, with 37,000 cases and 760 deaths in Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria last year.

“Governments in affected countries have shown great leadership and initiative in responding to humanitarian needs, with the support of aid organizations,” said the UN’s relief chief, Stephen O’Brien. “However, much remains to be done. An urgent scale-up in the humanitarian response is needed. I urge the international community and all donor governments in particular to step up their generous financial support to make this possible now.”

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