

# IASC Emergency Directors Group

## Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin

### Discussion Summary and recommendations

August 2016

1. **On 18 August 2016, the IASC Emergency Directors Group (EDG)<sup>1</sup> held a teleconference on Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin, with representatives of USAID and the US Department of State, ECHO and DFID.** The objective was to identify priority actions to scale up response capacity and support planning and resource mobilization efforts underway on the ground, based on an exchange of views on the collective humanitarian response in light of recent developments in access to previously unreachable areas and an increased understanding of the staggering scale and gravity of humanitarian needs in the area. The discussion built on reflections from the recent mission to Nigeria by USAID representatives Jeremy Konyndyk, of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), and Matt Nims of Food for Peace, as well as missions by the US Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration and the EC Commissioner of Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management. It followed from a similar meeting of the EDG with key donors to discuss the humanitarian situation and responses in Nigeria and Ethiopia in March 2016.
2. **The OFDA Director shared reflections from his recent mission, highlighting the stunning scale of needs in newly accessible areas, and his findings that the response capacity is far from commensurate and a concerted surge is urgently needed to close the gap.** He likened the mismatch of response sophistication versus need to the Ebola crisis, and the severity of food insecurity to major crises of the day. Shortcomings in the coordination structures and cohesion in planning were emphasized, as well as the availability of baseline information available on the conditions of affected people and services being delivered. Information management between and within sectors was noted as weak, with a lack of collective awareness of operational reach and activities. Reporting that the US was urgently deploying programmatic and technical staff to cover specific gaps and considering activating a DART, OFDA recommended that a core minimum package of assistance be defined, around which donors could rally.
3. **In arguing that a collective surge is required, he acknowledged potential challenges around political ramifications of an outright L3 declaration, and asserted that at a minimum, both cluster activation and individual agencies' activation of corporate emergency measures would be critical.** ECHO and DFID seconded the focus on scaling up and better structuring the response, following recent high-level visits, and voiced concerns around security and adapting to changes in the dynamics of violence in the sub-region, as well as the importance of leadership of the affected governments in the response.
4. **Emergency Directors reported that as areas previously unreachable due to the violence become accessible, the vulnerability and beyond emergency-level rates of malnutrition and health of affected people are becoming increasingly evident – and will only become more glaring as access opens.** In addition to current reports of severe acute malnutrition rates of 8-14 percent and under-5 mortality rates tripling the emergency threshold at 6.2<sup>2</sup>, the outlook is stark. With flooding becoming more severe in the wet season and reports of a decline in economic conditions, as well as outbreaks of polio and measles, the demand is not only for an immediate surge in life-saving assistance, but also longer-term interventions to support reintegration and livelihoods as needed. Protection concerns in particular are critical, with assessments of conditions in newly accessible areas pointing to rates of 30 percent of women and girls having experienced sexual violence – levels on par with or surpassing other major crises.
5. **Emergency Directors and donors alike highlighted the need for more robust coordination structures and emergency-experienced coordination capacity, and welcomed the HCTs' mobilization around proposals to activate clusters, strengthen sub-national hubs and plans for expansion.** It was noted that while some agencies

<sup>1</sup> ACF [Chris Lockyear], DFID [Robert Watt], ECHO [Androulla Kaminara], FAO [Daniele Donati], InterAction [Julien Schopp], ICRC [Denise Duran], ICVA [Nan Buzard], IMC [Chris Skopec], IRC [Bob Kitchen], IOM [Vincent Houwer], Mercy Corps [Madeline Rose], OCHA [John Ging], OHCHR [Scott Campbell], SCHR [Kate Half], STAIT [Gian Carlo Cirri], USAID [Jeremy Konyndyk (OFDA), Matt Nims (Food for Peace)], US Department of State/BPRM [Catherine Wiesner], UNDP [Jahal DeMeritens], UNICEF [Yasmin Haque], UNFPA [Ugochi Daniels], UN-Habitat [David Evans], UNHCR [Terry Morell], WFP [Denise Brown], WHO [Rick Brennan].

<sup>2</sup> Per 10,000 people per day. Emergency threshold is 2 per 10,000 per day.

had begun to mobilize internal corporate response structures, further action to mobilize and fast-track staffing and funding were needed, particularly among sector leads. They pointed to a need for a collective scale-up in coordination efforts and information sharing between NGOs, among IASC agencies, with the government, and among the donor community. Noting the dearth in capacity, several Emergency Directors reported on corporate plans for the remainder of 2016 to scale up in the north-east and activate measures to facilitate deployment of coordination leads to the north-east of Nigeria and Lake Chad, build supply pipelines and activate special emergency loans – which include revised funding requests. A strategy to support scale-up in Borno state was also being prepared at the regional level.

6. **While EDG members expressed appreciation for the recent rally in high-level engagement and notable injections of funding from key donors, they noted that the release of funds has been slow and a direct limiting factor on organizations' ability to respond.** It was highlighted that the response plans in each of the four Lake Chad Basin countries remain severely underfunded - at one-third or less for each. Activation of a broader base of donors was seen as an important step to mobilize resources to finance the operational surge, and to bolster engagement with the governments of the region. Upcoming high-level visits were cited as an opportunity to foster engagement on humanitarian issues and facilitate a common understanding of international support operations and requirements. A high-level event on the Lake Chad Basin scheduled for 23 September - to be chaired by the UN Secretary-General - was also presented as a key moment to generate energy and discussion among partners, including between the four governments. Members emphasized the sub-regional dimension of the crisis and the urgency of increasing funding for and attention to operations in Chad, Cameroon and Niger.

7. **Several EDs stressed the criticality of addressing operational challenges presented by the security situation in the north-east and Lake Chad region, and the importance of nurturing an enabling environment for operations, as well as more rapid funding to build out the necessary infrastructure,** as newly accessible areas begin to open and front line actors are able to reach people in dire conditions in deep field locations. Dedicated support and funding to set up the technical capacity and acquire equipment to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian workers would be of utmost importance to adapt to the changing dynamics of the violence, and to manage risks inherent in delivering on donor calls to expand the operational footprint. Donors assured EDG members that funding would be deployed more quickly to support operational organizations' efforts to scale up the needed structures in the north-east of Nigeria.

8. **The Emergency Directors reflected on possible approaches to achieving a rapid and collective scale-up in capacity.** While several proposed that activation of the system-wide Level 3 mechanism is an internal tool designed for - and applicable to - this purpose, which should be driven by operational, rather than political concerns, there was also strong support for moving quickly ahead with practical steps to mobilize each agencies' internal measures to consolidate response capacity. Many agencies reported that they had either already activated or were in the process of formally considering activation of their own corporate L3 equivalent, and the value of acting in unison to do this was recognized – drawing on the recent successes of the response in Ethiopia.

9. **The importance and role of affected governments was stressed, as was eagerness to maintain engagement in the context of planning and coordination.** It was reported that in recent discussions with top-level interlocutors, the government had stressed a strong willingness to facilitate administrative and logistical measures as needed to support scale-up of individual agencies' responses – customs clearances, visas and accreditations for staff, while preferring to avoid potentially contentious debates regarding broader system-level declarations of status or level. As a practical measure to build on momentum and deliver on the steps discussed, it was proposed that a set of five to six collective actions be defined for recommendation to the IASC to implement immediately.

10. **In response to calls to ensure that the permanent senior field leadership structure be deployed without delay as part of this collective action, it was confirmed that Mr. Eddie Kallon, current RC/HC for Jordan, had been selected to assume the RC role in Nigeria.** EDG members were informed that Mr. Kallon had been consulted on the candidates put forward by the EDG for the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator role for Nigeria, and was expected to share his recommendation in the coming days. The Chair recalled that the DHC role was to be relocated to Maiduguri, to reflect and promote the ongoing shift in the center of gravity of humanitarian operations to the northeastern region of Nigeria, and to increase the coverage of the operation where needs are greatest and most acute. It was also requested that EDG members provide feedback on a proposal to elevate the level of the RC position in Niger to a D2, so that the level of seniority of the position and experience required of its incumbent is on par with other operations in the region.

11. **Under other business, the EDG members were updated on the recent selection and accreditation of Mr. Ali Al-Za'tari as the incoming RC/HC for Syria.** Given the urgency of Mr. Al-Za'tari's deployment to Damascus to ensure continuity in the response, it was confirmed that the process was being fast-tracked, as was the accreditation process of Mr. Edward Kallon to take up the role of RC/HC in Nigeria.

**Proposed next steps and recommendations to the IASC Principals:**

- IASC members to actively explore triggering highest-level internal corporate measures or arrangements, if not done already, to facilitate urgent surge in response capacity [*immediate*]
- EDG to support Nigeria HCT recommendations on cluster activation and IASC members to consider rapid endorsement if recommended [*immediate*]
- IASC members to support Nigeria HCT on establishing the necessary coordination and information management systems and structures in north-eastern Nigeria [*immediate*]
- Field leaders and IASC members to continue engagement with governments to request practical support on operational matters as needed (customs, visas, accreditation), and communication on international mechanisms and structures for scaling up response [*immediate/ongoing*]
- IASC members to strengthen in-country protection capacities, including for SGBV and child protection, in follow-up to the recent Regional Protection Dialogue [*immediate*]
- IASC members to continue to support fast-track deployment of senior field leadership structures for Nigeria (RC designation and DHC selection and deployment) [*immediate*]
- EDG to provide feedback on recommendation to upgrade level of Niger RC/HC post [25 August]
- Donors to integrate humanitarian considerations in high-level visit agendas [*immediate*]
- Donors to explore means to speed up disbursement of funds to support expansion of footprint and front line operations, including necessary security structures [*immediate*]
- IASC members to continue to raise visibility of the Lake Chad Basin crisis through communications, high-level visits and engagement to rectify funding and capacity shortfalls and awareness of growing needs [*ongoing and particularly during the GA high-level segment*]
- IASC members and donors to mobilize highest-level participation, and advocate with relevant Member States, to support commitment to GA Lake Chad Basin event [*in lead up to 23 Sept*]