

Progress made but Lake Chad crisis is not over, says UN relief chief, urging greater support for region

Despite improvements in the humanitarian situation in the Lake Chad region, millions continue to remain dependent on lifesaving assistance, the top United Nations relief official said on Monday, urging greater international support for the region to safeguard the progress achieved.

[“There is still a big humanitarian crisis.](#) [It is] not over despite the progress we have made,” UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock told a high-level humanitarian conference on the region.

Last February, meeting at a UN-backed [conference in Oslo](#), Norway, donors [pledged](#) over \$650 million towards emergency assistance programmes in 2017 and beyond. These resources helped achieve a significant scale-up in the humanitarian response, reaching more than six million people with assistance, and averting a famine in northeast Nigeria.

The humanitarian situation is still bad, but it is better – *Mark Lowcock*

However, humanitarian needs continue to grow and so do the resources needed to respond. Of the \$1.58 billion [required](#) for 2018, only about \$600 million (38 per cent) has been [received](#) (as of 25 July).

“The appeal we had on the humanitarian response plan this year has been generously financed but not to the degree where any of us can be comfortable that we can meet the needs of the people we can reach, still less of those we are still trying to reach,” added Mr. Lowcock, urging additional funding and resources.

Some ten million people across the four countries – Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger – remain [dependent on assistance](#). At the same time relief workers face severe challenges reaching the worst affected due to Boko Haram violence, according to the UN [Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#) (OCHA).

Overcoming the ‘perpetual cycle’ of urgent needs and lifesaving responses

Alongside life-saving humanitarian response, addressing the underlying cause is vital to ensure lasting solution to the crisis, highlighted the UN relief chief, noting the need to scale up longer-term resilience and development assistance as well as promoting stabilization.

“If we can make more progress with peace building, good governance, the creation of jobs and education opportunities – and the respect of human rights – we work indeed with the underlying issues and this is what we need to do,” he said.

Organized by OCHA and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) together with the Governments of Germany, Nigeria and Norway, on 3-4 September in Berlin, the [conference seeks to maintain the momentum](#) from last year’s [Oslo conference](#) and increase and expand international support.

It is expected to reinforce an approach combining the response to immediate humanitarian needs with addressing the root causes of the crisis in a way that leads to sustainable, resilient development.



UNICEF/Naftalin

Children attend lessons at a UNICEF-supported school in Dikwa, Borno state, north-east Nigeria. The region was under the control of Boko Haram insurgents until the Nigerian army liberated it in February 2016.

Sectoral requirements

Of the sectors desperately needing resources is education, an area that often lacks funds in humanitarian emergencies.

With some one thousand schools reported to have been closed or rendered non-functional due to violence or unrest across the region, ensuring access education “can be both life-sustaining and life-saving,” said Manuel Fontaine, the Director of Emergency Programmes at [UN Children’s Fund](#) (UNICEF), in a [news release](#) on Monday.

Where there is insecurity, education can be both life-sustaining and life-saving – *UNICEF official Manuel Fontaine*

“Education supports children and young people’s lifelong learning. It gives them the necessary skills to build a better future for themselves and their families, and to contribute to peaceful and prosperous communities. Yet too often overall humanitarian education funding is lacking in emergencies.”

UNICEF has called for \$41.7 million to meet the education needs of children in the crisis but has received just 8 per cent of this amount in the first half of 2018.

Other sectoral priorities include food security and nutrition; emergency shelter and non-food items; protection; health; water, hygiene and sanitation; and early recovery.

[In Beijing, UN chief urges China, Africa for a win-win collaboration for ‘the future we want’](#)

Highlighting the economic and development progress made in China and Africa, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres urged them to unite their combined potential for peaceful, sustainable and equitable progress to the benefit of all humankind.

Speaking at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, in Beijing, Secretary-General Guterres underscored that it is vital that current and future development cooperation contributes to peace, security and to building a “community of [shared future for mankind](#).”

“China and Africa have strengthened their relationship in recent years, enjoying growing mutual trust and exchanges at all levels,” he said.

“I commend this engagement. Cooperation, based on the principles of the [UN Charter](#), can benefit your peoples and can benefit the international community as a whole.”

In his remarks, the UN chief also noted that development cooperation between them is increasing, based on the two mutually compatible roadmaps: the [UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and the African Union’s (AU) Agenda 2063.

Cooperation, based on the principles of the UN Charter [...] can benefit the international community as a whole – *Secretary-General Guterres*

In that context, he highlighted five areas, explaining that these will be crucial for the success of the partnership between China and Africa. These included **reinforcing the foundations of Africa's progress** given that stronger cooperation can help achieve sustainable and resilient development in the continent that is inclusive, reaching first those people that are furthest behind.

The Secretary-General also called for **ensuring national ownership and African-led sustainable development**. He noted the frameworks agreed between the UN and the AU on peace and security, as well as supporting Agenda 2063.

"These frameworks are based on our commitment to be a steadfast and trusted partner of Africa, with full respect for Africa's stewardship of its own future," said Mr. Guterres.

Noting the **importance of South-South cooperation** as "fundamental for fair globalization," the Secretary-General also highlighted the need to implement North-South commitments, including those assumed in the context of the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#) on financing for development.



UN China/Zhao Yun

Secretary-General António Guterres attends Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Summit in Beijing on 3 September 2018.

Mr. Guterres also called for **promoting sustainable fiscal policies**, underscoring that it is critical that Africa is supported to both preserve and create fiscal space for investments.

Climate change 'an existential threat'

Further in his remarks, the UN chief also highlighted the existential threat posed by **climate change**.

"A sustainable future for China, Africa and the world means climate-friendly

and climate-resilient development as it was underlined today by President Xi Jinping,” he said noting that the world is getting increasingly aware that climate change and environmental degradation are risk multipliers, especially for fragile states and vulnerable regions.

“China is today a global leader in climate solutions,” he added, urging the country to share its advances with Africa to enable the continent to leapfrog traditional polluting development in favour of green growth.

Concluding his remarks, the Secretary-General said that the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Summit “exemplifies the win-win collaboration that is necessary for the future we want.”

“The UN will continue to support the China-Africa Partnership and more broadly, South-South cooperation, so that all nations – in Africa and beyond – may enjoy sustainable and inclusive development,” he said.

Journalists’ conviction in Myanmar a message that press ‘cannot operate fearlessly’ – UN rights chief

Stressing that the legal process that led to the conviction of two Reuters journalists in Myanmar “clearly breached” international standards, the United Nations top human rights official called for their immediate and unconditional release.

In a statement on Monday, Michelle Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said that the convictions “send a message to all journalists in Myanmar that they cannot operate fearlessly, but [must rather make a choice to either self-censor or risk prosecution.](#)”

Earlier in the day, Kyaw Soe Oo (also known as Moe Aung) and Thet Oo Maung (also known as Wa Lone) were sentenced to seven years’ imprisonment on charges of violating, according to the High Commissioner’s Office ([OHCHR](#)), the “ill-defined” Official Secrets Act.

Their coverage of the Inn Din massacre by the military [...] was clearly in the public interest as it may otherwise never have come to light – *UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet*

In the [statement](#), Ms. Bachelet also said that the two journalists’ coverage of the Inn Din massacre by the military – for which the military subsequently admitted responsibility – “was clearly in the public interest as it may

otherwise never have come to light.”

“I call for their conviction to be quashed and for them to be released, along with all other journalists currently in detention for their legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of expression,” underscored the UN human rights chief.

Ms. Bachelet [assumed](#) her functions as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on 1 September. She succeeds Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, who held the position since September 2014.

[UN chief urges calm as violence erupts in Libyan capital](#)

Condemning the escalation of violence in and around the Libyan capital, Tripoli, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has called on all parties to immediately cease hostilities and grant humanitarian relief to those in need.

In a [statement](#) issued by his spokesperson, Secretary-General Guterres raised particular alarm over the use of indiscriminate shelling by armed groups leading to the death and injury of civilians, including children.

“The Secretary-General reminds all parties that the indiscriminate use of force is a violation of international humanitarian and human rights law,” noted the statement.

“He urges all parties to grant humanitarian relief for those in need, particularly those who are trapped by the fighting.”

In the statement, the UN chief also called on all parties to abide by the ceasefire agreement brokered by the UN and the Reconciliation Committees.

It added that Ghassan Salame, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya will continue to offer good offices and work with all parties to reach a lasting political agreement acceptable to all to avoid further loss of lives and for the benefit of the people of the country.

Mauritania: UN chief urges peaceful, credible elections

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has called on all parties in Mauritania to ensure peaceful and credible elections as the country holds legislative, regional and municipal polls on Saturday.

In a [statement](#) issued by his spokesperson, Mr. Guterres said he is “closely following” developments in the West African nation as it prepares to go to polls.

“[The Secretary-General] urges all parties to ensure the holding of elections that are peaceful and credible and allow for the participation of all interested stakeholders,” read the statement.

“He calls on all parties to ensure respect of the rule of law and that the human rights of all Mauritians are upheld.”

According to reports, some 98 political parties are participating in the elections this year, a marked increase over the last time polls were held.