



3RD LAKE CHAD BASIN GOVERNORS' FORUM FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION ON STABILISATION, PEACEBUILDING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

OPENING REMARKS

- Your Excellency Joseph Dion Ngute, Prime Minister of the Republic of Cameroun
- Your Excellency François Louncény Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary General, United Nations office for Central Africa
- Your Excellency Annadif Khatir Mahamat Saleh, Special Representative of the Secretary General, United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel,
- Your Excellency Ahunna Eziakonwa, Assistant Administrator and Director for Africa, UNDP
- Your Excellency Amb. Mamman Nuhu, the Executive Secretary of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) & Head of the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF)
- Excellencies, Governors of the Eight Affected Areas
- Members of Diplomatic Corps
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I am delighted to be part of the 3rd Meeting of the Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum for Regional Cooperation on Stabilization, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development. Coming at a time when COVID continues to limit our physical participation at such events, physical attendance at this forum represents an article of faith in our collective resolve to ensure that within the boundaries of health and safety, we deliberate on issues critical to the Lake Chad Basin Region. Our presence further represents a

vote of confidence in the ability and resolve of the Republic of Cameroon to provide the sanctity of space that enables fruitful deliberations on the way forward for the region. In this regard, I would like to express my gratitude to H.E. President Paul Biya and the Government and people of the Republic of Cameroon for the kind hospitality shown to delegates at the meeting. In many ways, this reflects the enduring support that His Excellency has offered to sub-regional efforts at stabilizing the Lake Chad Basin region. I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to H.E. Joseph Ngute, Prime Minister of the Republic of Cameroon, for gracing this occasion with his physical presence – a true demonstration of his commitment to cross border initiatives and his long-standing principle of leading by example.

Excellencies

It has been over two years since the AU PSC endorsed the RSS as an expression of its support to efforts by the Member States of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) to complement the gains made by the MNJTF in creating a safe and secure environment and contributing to stabilizing the situation in the areas affected by the activities of terrorists. Under the leadership of Amb. Mamman Nuhu, the LCBC, has demonstrated commitment to ensuring the full implementation of the strategy. This is commendable. I also pay tribute to the MNJTF for its efforts to secure the region, sometimes paying the ultimate price.

To our respected governors, I am pleased that you continue to demonstrate practical leadership in supporting and promoting initiatives that ultimately ensure stability, promote socio-economic recovery and sow the seeds of resilience in communities most affected by reckless acts of terrorism. Your recognition of the benefits of cross border cooperation in addressing the common challenges in the communities under your jurisdiction is helpful in the determination of mechanisms to support your efforts. We must, therefore, use this forum to firm up our commitments, exchange views on improving service delivery and tap into existing partnerships to sustain recovery and resilience efforts.

As we launch the Territorial Action Plans, there is a dual imperative for Governors and member states to mainstream the RSS into their national budgets to ensure effective allocation of funds for stabilization activities and for multilateral agencies and international partners to maintain their interest and financial support to stabilization activities in the Lake Chad Basin. Over the last year, the UNDP has shown that however modest interventions are, relative to the challenges, doing something is better than doing nothing. I, therefore, use this opportunity to applaud the countries that continue to provide financial support for

stabilization activities in the Lake Chad Basin region while inviting others to walk with us on this journey.

There is also the need to improve all aspects of coordination and collaboration, including strategic communication that enables unity of purpose and eliminates duplication of efforts. This will only be possible if we strengthen the inclusive approaches that inform our engagements and, by extension, involve the affected communities and Civil Society Organisations, Community Based Organizations, and Women and Youth groups while working closely with national governments and relevant regional mechanisms.

At the African Union Commission, we share the belief that Cross border cooperation is key to accelerating stabilization and recovery in the Lake Chad Basin. Therefore, we will continue to lend our political and technical support to platforms such as the Lake Chad Basin Governors Forum that seek to boost collaborative humanitarian and development activities in the Lake Chad Basin Region. I reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that what we started in 2018 through our support for the development of the Lake Chad Basin RSS, yields the expected impact.

I thank you for your kind attention.