

# Strategy on protection, return and recovery for the North-East Nigeria

Promoting integrated development and humanitarian solutions in principled manner

February 2017



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# Introduction

A series of consultations, under the technical support and guidance of UNDP and UNHCR, took place in Abuja, Borno, Adamawa and Yobe. These discussions, initiated based on a request by the Resident Coordinator (RC) during his recent visit to North-East Nigeria, were aimed at supporting the development of a durable solutions strategy for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria by the Boko Haram insurgency. In the Nigerian context, solutions for IDPs and returning refugees is broadly understood to encompass voluntary return to places of origin, local integration in areas of displacement or resettlement in another location in the country.

**Durable Solutions for displacement**

Durable solutions for IDPs and returning refugees is broadly understood to encompass 3 options: (i) voluntary return to places of origin, (ii) local integration in areas of displacement or (iii) resettlement in another location. Resolving displacement is a collective responsibility requiring a joint and coherent strategy combining interventions across the humanitarian-development nexus in the areas of security and protection, livelihoods and economic recovery, governance and social cohesion.<sup>1</sup>

The strategy encourages all actors to capitalize on the wealth of capacities existing within displaced communities to identify short, medium and longer term solutions to the complex array of issues they face, and to maximize and enhance the knowledge and expertise of national NGOs and other civil society actors in taking forward humanitarian and development work in North-East Nigeria. It also considers the needs and capacities of host communities who have been affected by the Boko Haram violence in the North-East. It also has, at its center, the protection of civilians and reflects the specific needs and realities of women, men, girls and boys of different backgrounds who are particularly marginalized and excluded.

**Towards a New Way of Working**

In the World Humanitarian Summit held in Istanbul in May 2016, key stakeholders including member states, UN agencies and NGOs committed to adopt a shift of mindset to bridge the humanitarian-development divide. They committed not only to leave no-one behind and respond to humanitarian needs, but also to reduce them by addressing causes of crises. The Summit called for a New Way of Working where humanitarian and development actors including donors could work together through joint analysis, joint planning, joint coordination, collective outcomes, and multi-year planning. This engagement strategy for the North East is a voluntary move towards the application of the New Way of Working in Nigeria.

The strategy in Nigeria will be aligned on the 2016 Buhari Plan developed by the President Committee for the North East Initiative (PCNI), contributing in particular to its second priority intervention on Rehabilitation, Relocation & Resettlement<sup>2</sup>. It will also establish linkages with to other Nigeria-specific programme and policy frameworks, including the Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment (RPBA)<sup>3</sup> and its follow-up action plans, the

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<sup>1</sup> In 2011, the UN Secretary-General adopted a Decision on Durable Solutions and an accompanying Preliminary Framework on Ending Displacement in the Aftermath of Conflict. In 2016, a Preliminary Operational Guide on Durable Solutions has been issued.

<sup>2</sup> The Buhari Plan is a comprehensive and inclusive programmatic framework with the following objectives: (i) Restoring Peace, Stability and Civil Authority in the North East region ; (ii) Co-ordinating the mobilisation of targeted resources to respond to the humanitarian crisis and jumpstart the region’s economies while strategically repositioning the region for long-term prosperity; (iii) Providing equal access to basic services and infrastructure; (iv) Promoting a civic culture that integrates zero tolerance to sexual and gender based violence with peaceful co-existence as the success indicator; (v) Accelerating equal access to quality education for girls as well as boys and building social cohesion; (vi) Targeting social and economic development and capacity building that reduces the inequalities affecting the poor, particularly women and youth ; (vii) Addressing environmental degradation through sustainable measures to halt desertification and protect the Lake Chad resources.

<sup>3</sup> Carried out in 2015 and 2016 by the Federal Republic of Nigeria, with support from the World Bank, the United Nations and the European Union.

2017 Humanitarian Response Plan, the UN Development Assistance Framework, and the National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nigeria. The strategy also draws on lessons-learned from other countries, recommendations of UN human rights mechanisms and principles enshrined in international and regional legal and policy instruments such as the Kampala Convention, the UN Guiding Principles, IASC Framework on Durable Solutions and the Secretary General's Decision on Durable Solutions. Finally, the strategy is underpinned by the commitments made by the Governments of Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger at the Regional Protection Dialogue on the Lake Chad Basin held in Abuja in June 2016, as set out in the Abuja Action Statement.

The search for solutions to displacement in North-East Nigeria is taking place against the backdrop of an environment which presents both opportunities and risks. Surveys carried out with Nigerian IDPs and refugees in Cameroon show that many are prepared to return to their places of origin within Local Government Areas (LGAs) when essential conditions are in place. Security and access to services, unsurprisingly, are universally cited by both IDPs as well as refugees in neighboring countries as the key issues which must be addressed to facilitate their returns. The vast majority of IDPs, estimated to be some 75%, live in host communities, while a smaller number, estimated to be some 25%, live in camps scattered across the North East. Over the past several months a number of main LGA town centers have been recovered by the military and in several of these locations groups of IDPs and refugees are spontaneously relocating, establishing makeshift settlements in proximity to areas where security forces have established a fixed presence. Despite recent improvements in access in Borno State, particularly to some LGA headquarters, access to many of these areas remains tenuous and territory beyond these militarized centers remains, for the most part, inaccessible for reasons of security. Boko Haram attacks on military outposts and convoys, as well as suicide attacks, including on civilian targets, remain frequent occurrences in Borno State.

Despite the aforementioned risks, it is imperative for humanitarian and development actors to jointly plan and implement interventions which contribute to government efforts to create an environment for solutions. Whereas several North-Eastern states and neighboring countries are affected by the crisis, the geographical scope of this strategy will be limited to Borno, Adamawa and Yobe, where the main impact of the conflict has been felt<sup>4</sup>. These are also the areas recognized as most affected by the authorities and covered by the proclamation of the state of emergency. While some elements of an overarching recovery and reconstruction effort may apply to all states, it is imperative that the case-by case nature of displacement, return movement and local capacity inform states-specific programs.

## Displacement related context in North-East Nigeria

The insurgency and its spillover into neighboring Cameroon, Chad and Niger have caused the displacement of over 2.5million people in the region, of whom 1.7 million are internally displaced in Nigeria: according to the IOM DTM Round XIII of Dec. 2016, 77.4% of IDPs originate from Borno, 8.6% from Adamawa and 6.3% from Yobe. Some 155,000 Nigerian refugees have over sought asylum in Cameroon, Chad and Niger. These three refugee-hosting countries also have sizeable Nigeria conflict-related IDP populations of their own (Cameroon: 200,000; Chad: 110,000; and Niger: 127,208).

The Boko Haram conflict has resulted in a protection crisis with immense national and regional implications. Structural drivers of the conflict, such as lack of development, the impact of climate change, human rights and governance deficits, as well as inequality, present major challenges that pre-date, and have been amplified by, the conflict. Even before the conflict, many areas in the North-East rated amongst the lowest against indicators on access to food, education, health and other basic services. These drivers cut across the Lake Chad region.

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<sup>4</sup> As clearly shown in the Recovery and Peacebuilding assessment, 2016



The ongoing counter-insurgency measures by the Nigerian security forces and regional multi-national security partnership have, over the past several months, led to limited improvements in access to some areas. However, the insurgency continues, with intensified clashes in the border areas with Niger and Chad, and regular Boko Haram attacks against military outposts, convoys and civilian targets, including suicide bombings involving in some cases children. In Borno State these ongoing incidents further threaten the existing, tenuous stability and worsen an already complex humanitarian situation. IDP camps and settlements face constant threats of attacks, leading to restrictive security measures around border areas and in refugee returnee and IDP settlements. **The civilian nature of the camps and informal settlements has also been seriously compromised.** Anecdotal evidence of the presence of unexploded ordnance have been reported in areas formerly controlled by Boko Haram, predominantly on farm lands, threatening those venturing to return and making the safe integration of both returning refugees and IDPs more difficult. In addition to the abuses and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in the context of counter-insurgency operations, the involvement of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), although crucial in providing some measure of safety and security, has also led to the emergence of a range of serious protection issues, including restrictions on freedom of movement, recruitment and use of children, and sexual and gender based violence. Decisions on the eventual role and future of this militia group, and accountability for abuses and violence, are likely to have direct repercussions for the reestablishment of security.

Determining the actual number of victims is a major challenge, with estimates varying from 20,000 to 100,000. A significant majority of the IDPs in camps and host communities are women and children indicating that men and boys have been killed in large numbers. Additionally, several IDPs have been unable to trace their family members or receive information on their fate. There is a need, therefore, for the government to be assisted in taking immediate steps to begin the process of identifying missing and killed persons. A database on victims will contribute immensely to recording the history of the conflict and addressing the right of families to know the fate of their relatives.

**The crisis has impacted the most vulnerable civilians,** including among refugees, IDPs and host communities. The majority, around 60 per cent, of those displaced are children. Many of these vulnerabilities have been well documented in a recent vulnerability assessments carried out in late 2016 in eight sites newly recovered by the military in Borno State. Women and children, who constitute a majority among IDP communities, have been exposed to grave, multiple risks. Violence against women and children, including sexual violence, resort to transactional sex, exposure to trafficking, and other forms of GBV, is widespread but underreported, the latter owing, at least in part, to challenges to access. One of the clear, underlying drivers of this is the inadequate distribution of high quality food, non-food items and services. A particularly heinous development has seen girls as young as six years old manipulated by suspected Boko Haram elements into carrying explosive devices that are detonated remotely. Observations from the recent military progress and opening up of areas previously under Boko Haram control and in IDP camps suggest that the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency, especially the extent of war-related sexual violence and killings, is still unfolding. There is a high level of stigmatization of babies born of abducted survivors of rape, referred to as "demonic" babies, and the perception that those who had lived under Boko Haram captivity have been indoctrinated and are thus sympathizers and potential sources of future conflict. They face suspicion, aggressive levels of discrimination and, in many cases, complete ostracization and violence. Former child soldiers attempting to rejoin their communities face many of these same issues. Safe access to energy remains a major challenge, with many women and children currently exposed to great risk on a daily basis as they collect the firewood essential for cooking.

Displaced girls are also increasingly likely to be subjected to arranged, early marriages. There are many unaccompanied and separated children among both IDP and returning refugee populations, as well as orphaned children whose parents have been killed in the conflict. Many IDPs, including women and children, have

suffered the trauma of witnessing and/or surviving extremely violent experiences, and there is a significant rise in the number of child and female-headed households. Youth, who constitute a significant group among IDPs (although no category for this group exists in present statistical reports) have been subjected to forced recruitment or instrumentalisation by armed actors, arbitrary arrest, detention, torture, GBV, as well as severe barriers to accessing education and livelihoods. Men, too, are exposed to forced recruitment, harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention, and disappearances. These specific threats to men, and a number of other factors, have led to a high incidence of family separation. IDP population demographics in NAAs are highly skewed with many DTM data showing almost twice as many females between the age of 18-49 when compared to males. Aside from extreme risk of physical violence, men and boys face coercive movement barriers and deprivation from both parties to the conflict with difficulties leaving opposition areas and entering government controlled areas. Older persons and persons with disabilities and/or chronic medical conditions face extreme hardship and encounter multiple problems in accessing basic as well as specialized medicines and treatment. Lack of legal documentation is another, near universal, problem among IDPs and returning refugees. IDPs are also regularly exposed to security screening, often in ways which challenge notions of respect and human dignity, and result in detention and extended stay under military screening. All displaced populations suffer from a lack of clear information on issues affecting them directly, which acerbates feelings of uncertainty, disempowerment and lack of agency. Only ad hoc channels for feedback and complaints exist, and these often do not connect with decision makers.

The vulnerability of civilian populations affected by the Boko Haram violence is multidimensional, including severe damage to social fabrics and linkages between communities. The experience of displacement has, in many cases, led to increased tensions and violent conflict within and between communities, with different narratives of what happened and ways of viewing 'the other' having developed between people of different ethnicities and religions and between those who left the conflict areas and those who stayed. If care is not taken, there is a strong possibility that these tensions could erupt into protracted violence. Furthermore, despite women making up the majority of the adults that will return, their participation and influence in formal decision making processes does not reflect this. Indeed, experience from a number of conflict affected contexts shows us that, in the aftermath of return, women often experience a backlash against the limited freedom and decision-making power they have been forced to assume as a result of the violent conflict. Efforts must be also be taken to mitigate this.

The psychosocial needs of the displaced population are vast and largely unmet. The experience of violence, persistent fear, uncertainty and loss among the displaced is exacerbated by a sense of a loss of dignity as many feel ashamed of their often dire living conditions and inability to change their circumstances. Resources for the provision of psychosocial support for the affected population are grossly insufficient given the magnitude of the needs.

For many of the displaced, day-to-day survival remains an existential struggle. Conflict and displacement have led to the direct loss of property, particularly farm land, which then translates into a loss of livelihoods, assets, trade networks, and rights. Livelihoods, including from farming, livestock transhumance flows, cross-border trade and, for those from the coastal areas of Lake Chad, fishing, continue to be severely curtailed. Fisheries in Lake Chad contributed significantly to household income, food security, nutrition, and employment, and provided an important safety-net for rural communities. Access to food, water and basic services is also severely restricted, resulting, for many, in resort to negative coping mechanisms. Malnutrition has become more prevalent especially among children and women with rates above the WHO alert threshold as the quantity and quality of available food has dramatically decreased during the conflict. Around 204,000 fishers are operational in the Lake Chad area. The production estimated to be in the order of 80,000-100,000 tons per year, with an estimated value between over USD 54 million is at high risk due to the ban on fishing activities and insecurity. Access to food, water and basic services is also severely restricted, resulting, for many, in resort to negative

coping mechanisms. Malnutrition has become more prevalent as the quantity and quality of available food has dramatically decreased during the conflict. In the recent vulnerability screening exercise, nearly all households screened stated that they have no reliable livelihood option. In addition to the major barriers to access to services and employment opportunities, rights to property and freedom of movement are significantly affected by displacement. Restrictions to movement between states also presents marked disadvantages to IDPs regarding their access to rights and essential services. Access to quality education is also a fundamental challenge for the displaced, with some 1,200 school facilities reportedly destroyed, others lacking even the most basic materials, and many teachers remaining unpaid for months on end. Shortage and inadequate housing facilities remains a dominant and persistent development challenge affecting the forcibly displaced, and is among the many challenges which will need to be addressed. It is also critical to prioritize mechanisms to address housing, land and property rights issues to avert conflicts that may be triggered by owners of property returning to their houses and farm lands to find that they are occupied by others.

**By January 2017, over one million displaced persons have returned.** However, the return of refugees and IDPs often involves serious risks, resulting in continued and often multiple displacement. For the time being, some movements have been induced by the poor humanitarian conditions in some sites and others have been forced. There are documented instances in which the voluntary chartered of refugee returns from neighboring countries to Nigeria is questionable, with information from areas such as Banki where refugee returnees describe situations akin to refoulement. It is however notable that positive measures have been taken by the Nigerian authorities to support institutional and policy reforms, but the legislative and policy framework remains a work -in-progress. The Nigerian Government has initiated, but not yet concluded, a tripartite agreement with Cameroon to facilitate the safe and dignified return of Nigerian refugees. No similar arrangements have yet been initiated with Niger and Chad. Nigeria also ratified the African Union Convention on the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in 2012. The House of Peoples' Representatives has established a committee on internal displacement to support the process of domestication. A new coordination structure at the federal level has been set-up in several states under the auspices of the Ministry of Economic Planning, and several states, including Borno, have established state bodies to support reconstruction and recovery. Gaps in coordination with and between the various levels in government persist, however.

**Displaced populations and returnees are not just survivors, but have great potential and capacity to be agents of change and to rebuild their lives.** Engaging, involving and partnering with youth, in particular, holds tremendous potential to harness the energy and innovation they can bring to all aspects of solutions and recovery. To date, however, efforts to fully involve the displaced and those who have returned in key planning and decision making have been largely absent. As previously noted, in Nigeria, the vast majority of IDPs are hosted in communities, many with family members and relatives. Over time, however, the resources and resilience of host communities has come under increasing strain. Mistrust of IDPs and returning refugees inevitably affects the feasibility of their integration into the community, and poses a potential challenge to peace and security. However, if these areas in host communities are properly supported with development packages, and displaced populations are fully involved, opportunities for livelihoods and local integration can be realized. Many of the displaced have relevant skills in agriculture, cattle raising, fish farming and trading which, if matched with financing, could translate into sustainable livelihood options, supporting the activation of local economic hubs. Evidence shows that the presence of the displaced populations has created economic opportunities in some of the most impoverished areas of the North-East, with, for example, the emergence of local markets in isolated areas to serve the needs of IDPs. Additional opportunities would most certainly emerge if access to small financing were available. Field research revealed that many IDPs and returning refugees have backgrounds in business or have skills that could be quickly put to productive use if they had access to start-up capital in the form of small grants or loans, which would in turn boost local economies. This option is more viable for IDPs who enjoy a greater degree of movement, work and property rights, but an adequate policy framework could unlock opportunities for refugees as well.

The conflict has inflicted significant damages both to community services, as well as to the social bonds between groups. The return and reintegration of IDPs and refugees must take into account both of these challenges. Returnees must be supported in their return process to ensure their humanitarian needs are met, but receiving communities must also be assisted as they begin to rebuild infrastructures and community services to care for both those who stayed and newly returning IDPs and refugees. Furthermore, interventions must adequately address the tensions and fragmentation between and within these groups to ensure the safe return and reintegration of IDPs and refugees. Mainstreaming conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the return process will ensure that the return and reintegration process leverages the opportunities for strengthening peace and security in the process of rebuilding the Northeast.

## Objective and strategy

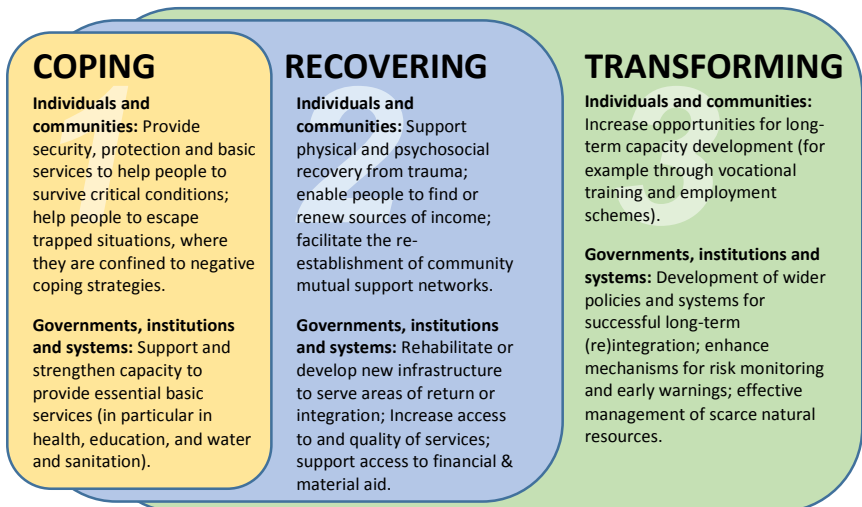
This strategy represents a collective contribution of the United Nations and international stakeholders to the Government initiatives for recovery and peacebuilding in the North East. Developed under the overall leadership of the RC, the purpose of the strategy is to align international support to, and build on the capacity of local authorities to operationalize government-led solution approaches in a manner that draws on best practices and is underpinned by applicable national, regional and international standards.

The overarching objective of the strategy is to support solutions of voluntary return, local integration or resettlement of displaced populations, and in doing so, contribute to the resilience of communities affected by the conflict in the states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe, with overall expected effects on recovery and peacebuilding.

The realization of durable solutions for Nigerian IDPs and refugees is a complex, multi-faceted process that must simultaneously addresses human rights, humanitarian, development, reconstruction and peacebuilding challenges. For this reason, the strategy adopts a *new way of working* jointly owned by humanitarian and development actors, for the development, financing, implementation and monitoring of integrated area-based interventions in affected North Eastern Nigerian states, including in areas where IDPs and refugees have returned or intend to return voluntarily.

The strategy follows a *phased, resilience-based development approach*, combining short, medium and long term programmatic interventions in an holistic and integrated way, to support durable solutions including in areas where IDPs and refugees have returned spontaneously. It covers key areas of security, protection, access to basic services, livelihoods and economic security and social cohesion. This approach allows humanitarian and development actors to articulate immediate life-maintaining and/or life-sustaining actions with longer-term support, through three tracks of interventions, all starting as soon as possible but varying in intensity over time.

### The Resilience-based Development approach for North East Nigeria





# Guiding Principles

The strategy will be implemented in accordance with the following overarching principles.

- **State responsibility and capacity:** The primary responsibility for providing solutions for displaced population needs to be assumed by the Nigerian government, both at the federal, state and LGA levels, and programmatic action should be based on dialogue and guidance from government authorities in relation to the government's own plans for the reconstruction and recovery of North East states. The current strategy is proposed to the government to form the backbone of a future national strategy of durable solutions for displacement in the North-East of Nigeria.
- **The centrality of protection:** All actors must respect the rights of affected populations to make an informed and voluntary choice with regard to the solution they would pursue. It is important that measures are taken to avoid disruption of humanitarian interventions, family separation, GBV and other protection incidents linked to the premature and unprepared return of IDPs and refugees. Specific attention must be given to the needs of the most vulnerable, including ensuring their prioritized access to adequate safe and nutritious food, material support, legal assistance, justice, reconciliation, documentation, and essential and specialized services. All interventions, irrespective of sector, should be underpinned in design and implementation by sound gender and social protection analysis. Compliance with human rights and international humanitarian law should form an integral part of the response, while recognizing the legitimate national security concern of the government.
- **Partnerships and linkages between humanitarians and development actors:** The successful pursuit of integration will require common frames of reference, including frameworks for spatially integrated planning, shared systems for gathering and disseminating data that are simultaneously oriented to humanitarian and development needs, opportunities for joint programming, and consistent criteria and processes for joint monitoring and learning.
- **Community participation, involvement and accountability:** IDPs, returnees, host community representatives, community leaders and faith-based groups and local government officials need to be fully involved in the planning and implementation of interventions, with specific attention to promoting gender equality. Programmatic interventions should encourage partnership with and the inclusion of displaced populations, as well as IDP and refugee returnees, into local development planning, and enhance open platforms for equal consultation with displaced and local communities, ensuring that both benefit from operational responses and have active avenues to provide feedback and complaints. Partnering with community-based organizations, national NGOs and other civil society members to build on their extensive experience and knowledge also needs to be prioritized by humanitarian and development actors.
- **Mainstreaming of gender and social inclusion:** All actors must integrate gender perspectives into programming, ensuring that interventions have a positive impact in enabling women's rights, voice and participation, and benefit girls, women, boys and men. They must also integrate analysis of social exclusion and how it works in particular communities to ensure programming benefits all in the community.
- **Do no harm and building the foundations for peace:** The needs, rights and legitimate interests of IDPs, returning refugees and host communities need to be the primary considerations guiding all policies and decisions on solution. There is substantial risk that interventions may increase or exacerbate tensions within

and between communities and not harness their potential to positively contribute to improving conflict dynamics. This strategy and interventions pursued by all actors must be founded on sound and frequently updated conflict analysis at community, LGA and state levels, reflection on the interaction (positive and negative) of proposed interventions with conflict dynamics, and adjustments to increase positive impacts and mitigate against negative impacts. All interventions must be based on the principle of Do No Harm and aim to strengthen drivers of peace on the community level to ensure that the peacebuilding potential of the Northeast is fully harnessed. To support the building of a foundation for peace, these principles need to be mainstreamed into interventions targeting individuals, communities and systems, to ensure that the recovery in the North East fully leverages the humanitarian-development-peace nexus to effectively stabilize and aid in the recovery.

- **Evidence-based, risk-informed programming:** Interventions should be based on needs identified and agreed in consultation with concerned populations. Evacuation or relocation must take place in full respect of international standards in line with relevant international law. IDPs should not be relocated from one location of displacement to another where they are still dependent on humanitarian assistance. Interventions by humanitarian and development actors should be focused on IDPs returning to their areas of origin (previous habitual residence) , when conditions permit, or to other areas where essential government services and civilian infrastructures are in place, not to another camp.

## Minimum conditions for engagement in return areas

The involvement of humanitarian and development actors in the government return plans should be done in a structured and phased manner that, first and foremost, maintains the voluntary nature of return, the safety and dignity of persons of concern, and their full involvement in decision-making. Restored security, safe access and the availability of government services are essential. **Many LGAs in Borno, and a small number in Adamawa and Yobe, are at present not suitable for the safe and dignified return of IDPs and refugees.**

- **Security:** Restoration of security in areas of return is the main preoccupation of IDPs and returning refugees. It is paramount to any programmatic intervention. IDPs and returning refugees must be protected from violence, threats and intimidation, undue restrictions to their freedom of movement, mines, booby-traps and unexploded ordinances and any other threats to their rights and security. Beyond the role of the military, a minimal presence of civilian law enforcement, administrative, judicial, criminal justice and human rights institutions to protect returnees and their resources are necessary conditions to ensure a sense of security and trust among civilians.
- **Access:** Areas of return should be safely accessible to populations of concern, as well as humanitarian and development actors, and the population's access to basic services and livelihoods without limitations and discrimination must be guaranteed. This is essential to humanitarians as well as development actors considering incremental implementation to full programming that can transition to recovery. In Borno, there are presently very few LGAs where such access is not problematic for reasons of security.
- **Full participation and involvement:** IDPs and returning refugees must have full access to accurate and objective information on the general situation in the community of origin, LGA capitals and centers, the mechanisms foreseen to ensure reintegration, and those available to ensure continued assistance. Along with other community members, they should be actively involved as equal partners in all planning and decision making which affects them. Specific measures must systematically be taken to ensure the full and

equal participation, including in leadership structures, of women, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities and other groups at constant risk of marginalization. Participation includes the ability for community selected individuals from a displaced population to safely visit areas of potential return and report back to their community. IDPs that have moved closer to their location of origin, such as an LGA headquarter, need also to be included in all decision making and information gathering.

- **Voluntariness of return:** IDPs and returning refugees must have full access to accurate and objective information on the general situation in the community of origin, LGA capitals and centers, the mechanisms foreseen to ensure reintegration, and those available to ensure continued assistance. IDPs, IDP and refugee returnees, and refugees should be protected from direct coercion through, among others, physical force, harassment or intimidation, and also indirect coercion, including through the provision of erroneous information, the denial of basic services, or the closure of IDP camps or facilities without the provision of an acceptable alternative. Returns that occur because an alternative solution is not available are not voluntary, even if IDPs acquiesce. The provision of material which aims to influence a decision, particularly when not coupled with similar assistance in case another option is chosen, may also amount to coercion. Humanitarian actors should not reduce services in an area of displacement when there has been no change in the needs of that population as this can have the effect of acting as a push factor.
- **Availability of basic socio-economic services:** IDPs and returning refugees should have equal access in the early phases of return to means of survival and basic services, such as potable water, food, housing, health services and education, along with measures to underpin sustainable reintegration including livelihoods. The delivery of basic services is the responsibility of the government, with support from the humanitarian partners, if and when required. It is also essential to engage early in local economic revitalization activities that will address the lack of opportunities, one of the long-standing grievances at the core of the conflicts.

## Components of the strategy

Effective and targeted programming will require significant improvements in security, availability of resources and local capacity. International actors in Nigeria are grappling with the dilemma of whether to assist IDPs who spontaneously return or relocate even though they were informed that conditions are not safe. On a case by case basis, it may be appropriate to assist IDPs in such situations if this mitigates the risks they face, while strictly abstaining from actively or inadvertently promoting unsafe return or relocation. To support the immediate needs of civilians, including IDP and refugee returnees, the strategy will outline prioritized short-term to mid-term actions. These will aim to kick-start *short-to-mid-term* interventions to build secure and protective environments, restore services and ensure livelihoods.

In a *long run* as security gradually improves, access to displaced population is guaranteed and IDPs and refugees return or find solutions in other parts of Nigeria, national authorities will take the lead to promote longer term solutions, with the support of the UN agencies and other stakeholders in an inclusive process. For international actors, this means a) defining with national actors, as relevant, a shared problem statement and long-term vision for collective support, including priorities and risks, to address the common problem statement; and b) timing international plans, programmes and appeals to fit where possible with national planning cycles. This may occur in a very different time frame between Borno, Yobe and Adamawa meaning that no common timeline should be considered across the three states.

Local authorities, faith based institutions, non-government institutions and communities play crucial roles in improving access to services, promoting social-cohesion and supporting solution-oriented interventions. Activities aiming at *reinforcing their capacities* are therefore also included into each component.

## Support improvement in security

The reestablishment of security and the civilian character of areas of return and potential return, and the promotion of adherence to humanitarian and human rights law, are the essential cornerstones to displacement solutions. The following actions will be carried out by humanitarian and development actors in support of these critical objectives:

<i>Coping – Short term</i>	<i>Recovering – Medium term</i>	<i>Transforming – Long term</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support capacity building of security forces, including police, and the Multi-National Joint Task Force on humanitarian and human rights law, to increase trust and confidence in security institutions and ensure they are responsive to the human security needs and concerns of civilians.;</li> <li>▪ Provide logistic, equipment and accommodation support aimed at facilitating the reestablishment of civilian police, including female police and specialized units to deal with the high incidence of GBV, in areas of current areas of displacement, return and potential return;</li> <li>▪ Support mine action emergency risk education campaigns; mine action integrated survey of hazardous areas with risk education and explosive ordnance disposal; mine action victim assistance, needs assessment and individual rehabilitation response.</li> <li>▪ Improve civil-military coordination through expanding the current structure in Borno to cover Yobe and Adamawa.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Integrate into established state security services vigilante and other irregular security-related entities.</li> <li>▪ Carry out regular security assessments of the areas of return</li> <li>▪ Extend the implementation of the regional program of small arms control to the North East</li> <li>▪ Promote contact and dialogue between security forces and civilians, initiate joint civil-military security committees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support long-term deployment of security forces: training, equipment, construction of camps and police stations</li> <li>▪ Promote the adoption of community policing approaches</li> <li>▪ Initiate the process of transforming the security sector to improve its responses, enhance transparency and governance, and promote human security.</li> </ul>

## Promote protection

In order to align with international standards, provide needed protection services, promote and advocate for protection principles, ensure the full participation of IDPs, returning refugees and host communities, and guarantee that minimum conditions for return are met, the following actions will be prioritized by humanitarian and development actors.

<i>Coping – Short term</i>	<i>Recovering – Medium term</i>	<i>Transforming – Long term</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strengthen systems for the identification of persons with specific needs, such as women and children at risk, male youth, older persons and persons with disabilities, and improve multi-sectoral referral and response mechanisms in order to ensure unfettered access to basic services.</li> <li>▪ Establish safe spaces for vulnerable populations (orphans,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strengthen systems to prevent and respond to SGBV, in full compliance across all sectors with the IASC guidelines on Integrating GBV Interventions in Humanitarian Action, as well as systems to protect all children and safeguard their best interests.</li> <li>▪ Develop and implement strategies to ensure the education of girls and boys, including identification of suitable locations for schools,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support the development of legal and policy framework, including the domestication of the Kampala Convention.</li> <li>▪ Enhance programs and facilities for prevention of extremism the reintegration of former child soldiers and children/others suspected of past association with Boko Haram</li> </ul>



<p>UASCs, girls and women at risk) to access critical services and information key to their protection and well-being.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Involve women in decision making processes and peacebuilding, in keeping with SCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security;</li> <li>▪ Expand psycho-social support tailored to the diverse needs of affected populations, including IDPs, returnees and host community members.</li> <li>▪ Support the establishment of screening and other security measures to maintain the civilian and humanitarian character of refugees and IDP sites</li> <li>▪ Strengthen frequency and coordination of needs assessment and regular consultation with IDPs and host communities, including rolling intention surveys and protection monitoring.</li> <li>▪ Work with government authorities to establish responsive two-way channels of communication with displaced and host communities</li> <li>▪ Support the establishment of screening and other security measures which maintain the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee and IDP sites and are transparent with clear criteria and due process in line with international and national laws on detention and screening facilities.</li> </ul>	<p>sensitization to counter apathy towards the state system of education and to persuade families of the importance of girls' education, provision of teachers and schemes to waive school fees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expand training of key stakeholders (e.g., village leaders, religious leaders, and teachers) on conflict resolution and peace building tailored to the specific, varied circumstances from location to location.</li> <li>▪ Implement specific protection activities including family unification, access to justice, access to documentation and replacement of documents.</li> <li>▪ Bring persons in detention for terrorist related offences within the national legal system.</li> <li>▪ Support development of a database on victims to record the history of the conflict and address the right of families to know the fate of their relatives.</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish effective and accessible mechanisms to resolve housing, land and property issues.</li> <li>▪ Support justice and accountability initiatives to accompany reconciliation and facilitate healing. Communities must see perpetrators of human rights abuses and violations, including security and allied forces, brought to account by the national authorities using the national courts in order to provide foundation for healing and reconciliation.</li> <li>▪ Support local authorities to provide legal services and assistance in displacement affected areas to all affected population.</li> <li>▪ Support measures that create a conducive and safe environment for reconciliation and reintegration</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>
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## Deliver basic services

Delivery of basic services is the responsibility of the government but might be supported in the short and medium term by humanitarian and development actors, when capacities are insufficient, and with a focus on the areas of displacement and return. It will be based on needs of both returning IDPs and refugees, and local communities to avoid further tensions, and in respect with the sectoral norms in application. All IDPs and returning refugees benefit from access to services including in areas of displacement, IDP camps and camp-like settlements. In the areas of return, the provision of services will rely as much possible on national institutions. In this regard, capacities of actors will be progressively reinforced to ensure a proper transition and sustainability of the service delivery. Public Private partnerships for services delivery, including involvement of CSOs/NGOs will be explored.

### Interventions:

<i>Coping – Short term</i>	<i>Recovering – Medium term</i>	<i>Transforming – Long term</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Housing: Provide support to the most vulnerable to rebuild or secure adequate shelter, when a durable solution to their displacement can be ensured</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Construction of new water &amp; sanitation infrastructure in public places for IDPs, host communities and return areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide specialized training to service providers on psychosocial support and violence prevention. On this, it is recommended to establish adult education</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water and sanitation: Ensure temporary provision of water and sanitation facilities in areas where presence of displaced people put a pressure on the current capacity</li> <li>Ensure that access to basic services is guaranteed for to all, especially both sexes without discrimination.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiate debris management and collection of solid waste through work intensive approaches</li> <li>Health and education: Support the rehabilitation and reconstruction of health facilities and schools destroyed in the conflict as well as those deteriorated by use as temporary shelters</li> <li>Once conditions for return are in place, conduct vetting and facilitate return of teachers and health workers on a voluntary basis, to reestablish service in areas affected by displacement.</li> <li>Access: rehabilitate access roads to key basic services through work-intensive techniques</li> <li>Psychosocial support: Provide training to medical and psychosocial health personnel to assist GBV survivors.</li> <li>Ensure full participation of community members in the management mechanisms of the basic services (including IDPs/returning refugees, and women)</li> </ul>	<p>programs, as a way also to address psychosocial needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide policy support and build capacities of the competent authorities in the management, extension and maintenance of the key public services</li> <li>Support the development of systematic civil registration system at the local and state level.</li> <li>Support the government at the state and LGAs level to set up systems for municipal solid waste management</li> <li>Build capacities of stakeholders at the LGA and state level on local development, and develop local development plan through participatory approaches including needs of affected populations.</li> </ul>
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## Promote Economic Recovery and livelihoods

The immediate priority in many of the areas in Borno and to some extent in Adamawa and Yobe will be to provide livelihoods opportunities to the returning IDPs, refugees and local communities, by working closely with the Government, at all levels. The strategy combines several interventions to save lives but also build resilience of the affected communities and populations, including the returnees. It will be critical to ensure that life-saving assistance is principled, timely, effective and efficient, and at the same time contributes, as far as possible, to the resilience of the affected population. Supporting both returnees and local population through a common approach is expected to create a positive movement of engagement and avoid community tensions.

<i>Coping – Short term</i>	<i>Recovering – Medium term</i>	<i>Transforming – Long term</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide life-sustaining dignity packages to returnee families and vulnerable community members;</li> <li>Deliver short-term skills training on immediate farming and non-farming livelihoods opportunities based on market studies;</li> <li>Distribute start up kits to help returnees and host communities establish basic farming, and provide grants for business revival (livestock, agriculture, trade, processing, etc);</li> <li>Provide temporary jobs to the returnees and vulnerable community members for the rehabilitation of community socio-economic infrastructure through work-intensive building methods,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate access to mid-term vocational training programmes for returnee and vulnerable community members, in profitable farming and non-farming activities;</li> <li>Provide access to finance for business development: promotion of saving through self-managed saving groups, provision of startup grants, facilitation of access to credit;</li> <li>Structuration of local producers into associations linked with savings groups (women’s trading groups, farming pre-cooperatives, etc), and provision of related technical training and advice;</li> <li>Provide viable options of livelihoods diversification and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the policy environment to enable more conflict-sensitive economic growth, engagement of the private sector as well as economic growth in deprived regions, notably in livestock and agricultural products.</li> <li>Reinforce the capacities of key ministries and administrations at the central, state and local level to lead, implement and monitor economic recovery programmes.</li> <li>Carry-out advocacy to reconstruct large-scale damaged infrastructure and markets that foster regional trade. Such reconstruction strategies can be based on existing strategic frameworks for reconstruction and</li> </ul>

<p>combined with a skills training at work component.</p>	<p>economic opportunities for young men who are at risk of radicalization, as a specific sub-group of beneficiaries;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support targeted measures for women’s economic empowerment, sensitive to local gender norms, to improve women’s access to economic resources, ensure their participation and enhance their decision-making power;</li> <li>▪ Training for women on prevention of violent extremism (women often lack religious trainings and can blindly follow extremist ideology as well).</li> <li>▪ Assessment and development of agribusiness value chains, and set up an engagement facility with the private sector</li> <li>▪ Assist with the development of community information, education and mobilization campaign for Peace and economic recovery opportunities especially through Radio</li> </ul>	<p>recovery such as the Recovery and Peace Building assessment for North East Nigeria and the Lake Chad Action Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote local economic development and support the development of profitable value chains to support inclusive growth through the targeting of vulnerable groups (e.g., access to land by female heads of household).</li> <li>▪ Development, strengthening and diversification of relevant market-related skills for self-employment. This includes capacity building of the vocational and skills training institutions to improve, adapt and extend the current training offer, as well as building a coherent offer of business development services adapted to rural areas.</li> <li>▪ Advocate for the engagement of women. The promotion of gender equality and women’s economic empowerment through voluntary measures grouped in a priority plan of action for women’s empowerment in the NE of Nigeria, to be developed with the relevant stakeholders.</li> </ul>
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The proposed measures will rely on preparatory actions in each LGA of intervention, including: (i) a gender-responsive, conflict-sensitive mapping of local livelihoods activities and opportunities, and local market structure; (ii) a vulnerability analysis of returnee and local populations; (iii) the agreement of local stakeholders on a local return and recovery plan, including solutions for equitable access to productive land.

## Support Peace-Building, Reconciliation and Social Cohesion

The insurgency has deepened the cleavages in the social fabric of the North-East. The Recovery and Peace-Building Assessment – RPBA (2016) undertaken in the North East identified patterns of cleavages, some relate directly to Boko Haram violence and others linked to pre-existing, factors or wider social trends. They include incidence of fragmentation and tension along religious and ethnic lines; tensions between host communities and the internally displaced; and stigmatization of individuals seen as associated with Boko Haram. Added to these are challenges are challenges related to reintegration of former combatants (Boko Haram and Civilian Joint Task Force) and managing the return of IDPs.

There is therefore the need for an integrated and balanced approach to return and recovery with the application of general principles contributing to improved social cohesion, to be applied throughout all components:

- Strategic responses should be informed by continuous contextual analyses, including outcomes of State Security Council meeting;
- Promotion of community approach to provision of relevant incentives/motivations and reintegration packages for peacebuilding and reconciliation;
- Ensuring that peacebuilding, conflict resolution, reconciliation and the prevention of violent extremism (PVE) is mainstreamed across all interventions, taking into account the peculiarities of each state;
- Phasing and prioritization of activities, taking into account the return patterns and devising appropriate responses in highly insecure contexts with continuing displacement.

In parallel, beyond these general principles, specific activities are proposed in this field:

<i>Coping – Short term</i>	<i>Recovering – Medium term</i>	<i>Transforming – Long term</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct local conflict and development analysis at the local level in areas of return.</li> <li>▪ Conduct training of key stakeholders (e.g., village leaders, religious leaders, and teachers) on conflict resolution, including disputes because of land ownership, counseling, and other life skills.</li> <li>▪ Strengthen formal and informal conflict resolution mechanisms and improve the security of the population and property</li> <li>▪ Promote social cohesion activities with an active role for the youth (sport tournament, cultural event, etc) showing positive change in the communities.</li> <li>▪ Support community radio stations to produce message of peace, religious tolerance, nationhood, etc to assist in the reintegration process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct regular conflict scans and set up community based early warning systems for risks monitoring</li> <li>▪ Enhance capacity of community leaders in dialogue and reconciliation, trauma healing, human rights and rule of law;</li> <li>▪ Establish partnerships amongst stakeholders for alternative dispute resolution (ADR) to enhance restorative justice.</li> <li>▪ Assess local formal and informal justice system that could potentially be empowered to provide legal assistance and justice to the displaced, address disputes between the displaced and community members, and support social cohesion building.</li> <li>▪ Initiate target actions aimed at maximizing the agency and capacities of individuals and communities, including youth, to contribute as equal partners to solutions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide technical/financial support the States and LGAs in the establishment of peacebuilding and social cohesion platforms/committees, in line with Government policy/directives (at Federal and State levels) on issues of transitional justice and related normative documents;</li> <li>▪ Strengthen institutions that promote democratic governance of security and the rule of law.</li> </ul>

## Implementing the strategy

### Cross-sector plans and joint programming

Implementation of the solution strategy requires the elaboration of cross sectorial plans, bringing together humanitarian and development actors under the leadership of the relevant authorities. Solution-oriented interventions must be supported by collaborative approaches that allows: (1) building a common understanding of risks, needs, gaps and existing capacities achieved by sharing analysis and pooling relevant data; (2) defining collective outcomes for the short-, medium- and long-term outcomes fully taking into account capacities and resources, and (3) designing joint programming whenever possible by clarifying who does what, and (4) improving monitoring tools which identify the right measures to inform if collective objectives are being achieved and ways to carry out and promote effective joint analysis, planning and programming. The declaration of the plan at the local level will allow for improved engagement and ownership of the local stakeholders on the process in the priority areas.

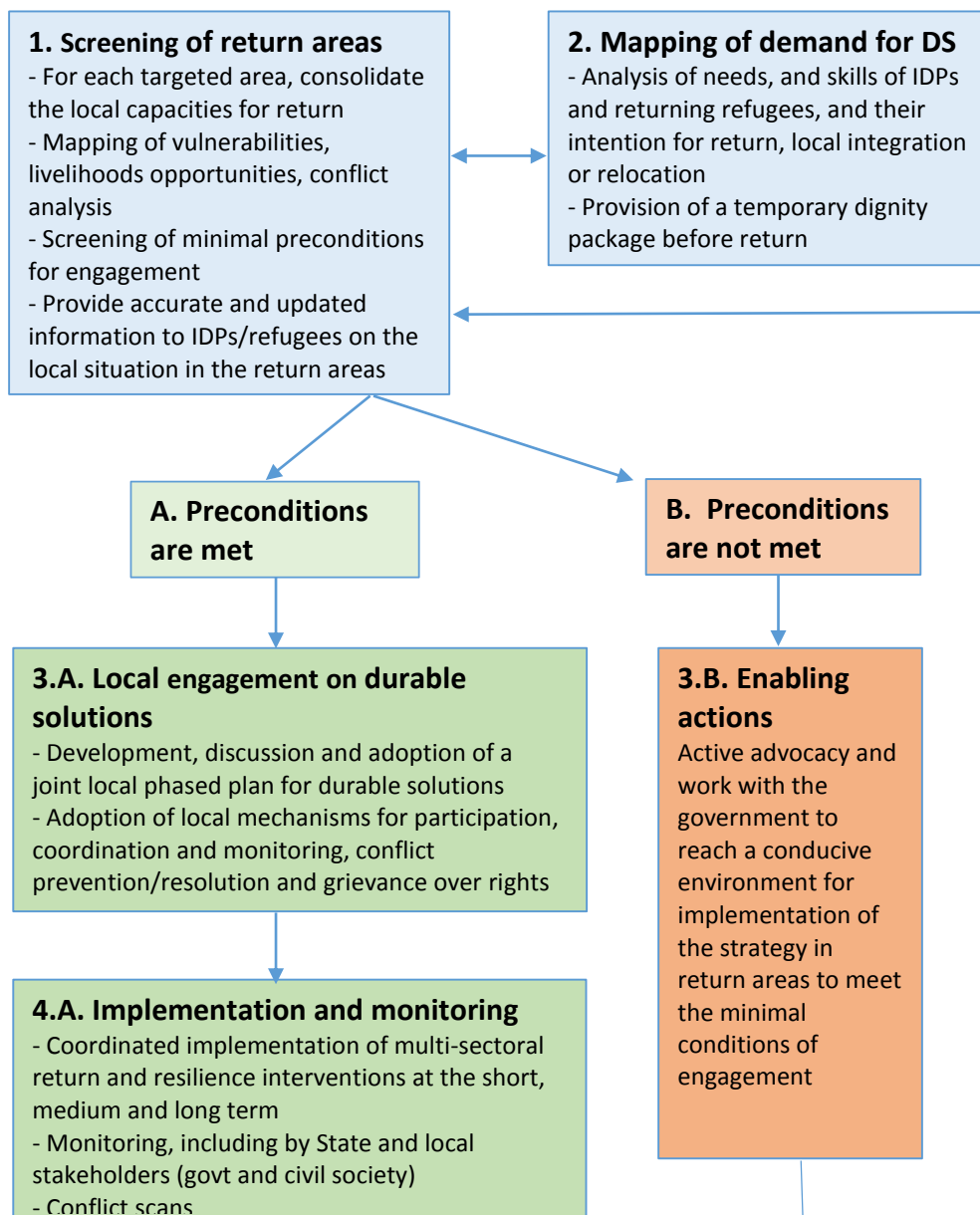
### Critical path – Steps for implementation at the local level

#### Critical path – Steps for implementation at the local level

The implementation of the strategy at the local level in a given area will follow a process in four successive steps:



1. Screening of the pre-conditions for engagement in the return areas, and provide accurate information to the IDPs and refugees (if conditions are not met, a special effort in advocacy and joint work with the government will be carried out to improve the security, access, and availability of basic services in these areas)
2. Validation of the intentions and capacities for return/local integration/relocation by IDPs and returning refugees.
3. If the preconditions of engagement are met, community engagement activities will be conducted to discuss and adopt a local integrated plan for durable solutions with all relevant stakeholders, and implementation mechanisms will be agreed on.
4. Coordinated implementation and monitoring of the multi-sectoral interventions under the three work streams of the resilience based development approach.



## Coordination

International partners should continue supporting horizontal and vertical coordination among government entities. It calls for strong partnership between humanitarian and development actors and effective coordination

with government authorities both at the Federal and State levels. International partners should use various coordination channels including the UNCT and HCT to promote convergence and bring about clarity of roles and responsibilities. Integration between coordination mechanisms ensuring the involvement of development actors such as the World Bank and African Development Bank and both international and national NGOs working on development must be explored.

Multiple government agencies exercise roles and responsibilities which have direct implications on the implementation of effective solution strategy. In each LGA where the strategy is implemented, an inclusive coordination structure based if possible on existing mechanisms will be supported to ensure overall coordination of the activities, issues solving and monitoring of the strategy.

## Regional Bodies and Partners:

- Facilitate the establishment of a regional platform and a common policy framework for displacement
- Coordinate regional military, humanitarian and developmental efforts to address conflict and displacement.
- Develop and monitor a comprehensive shared action plan for handling conflicts and displacement.
- Strengthen regional, national and local capacity for open dialogue, consultation, inclusive planning, budgeting and implementation.
- Support humanitarian and developmental partners in program implementation.

## National Governments:

- Ensure physical and legal conditions for safe and voluntary return of IDPs and refugees.
- Restore security in displacement-affected areas.
- Revisit, revise and enforce national displacement policies regarding IDPs and refugees.
- Incorporate programmatic responses addressing needs of displaced population in national and local development plans, and treat refugees and IDPs as a target group of vulnerable population.
- Facilitate self-reliance efforts of the displaced, whether they choose to return, settle, or migrate to a 3rd location.

## Humanitarian and development Partners:

- Advocate and provide prompt humanitarian assistance to affected population in both areas of displacement and host communities.
- Advocate and provide assistance for the harmonization and revision of refugee and IDP laws and policies focusing on registration, cross-border population movements and human rights.
- Assess best practice and sustainable solutions to identify displacement challenges in the region so as to put forward scalable programs for the transitional approach and self-reliance programs..
- Establish a framework of reference – including analysis of impacts, needs, risks and opportunities – as guidance for country-level and regional consultation, continued policy dialogue, and shared action plan.
- In the short-term, explore extension and additional financing of existing projects to benefit wider range of displacement-affected population.
- In the medium- to long-term, design and implement integrated and multi-sectoral recovery and development programs that can create synergies to address pull and push factors of displacement and root causes of conflicts.
- Maintain an effective collaboration between humanitarian and development partners under the new paradigm for an integrated and holistic approach to displacement in the

## Civil society and private sector

- Participate in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the strategy
- Ensure effective communication about the strategy towards the affected populations
- Help mobilize the youth to become positive actors of social change
- Help ensure active participation of vulnerable groups, with specific attention to women
- Private sector to participate in the recovery efforts and support the development of agribusiness value chains in the affected areas and contribute to the skills building and employment creation
- Identify the leading Private Sector companies from neighboring regions with immediate interests in accessing these previously closed markets or capable of supporting the revival of feasible value chains, and provided them incentives to support this initiative especially in sub-sectors related to food, water, health, education basic services and products.

In addition humanitarian and development actors must take action to enhance regional coordination and exchange of best practices through greater engagement by authorities and humanitarian actors with regional institutions that have direct involvement in the region such as the Multinational Joint Task Force, African Development Bank and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

#### Mobilization of funds

The government (at all levels) must assume the primary responsibility in meeting the needs for displaced populations in Nigeria to achieve protection, access to services and realize solutions. Donors and the private sector must be mobilized to support national and state-level efforts through robust fund mobilization frameworks, joint advocacy and programming efforts. This has adversely affected the level and adequacy of humanitarian assistance in the North East operation. A case in point is the fact that the Early Recovery Sector received no funding in 2016. The recent decision by the Humanitarian Country Team to establish pooled funding is therefore a great relief as this will contribute to improved access to funding for life-saving interventions when there are shortfalls.