



**INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE TRIPARTITE COMMISSION FOR THE VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION
OF NIGERIAN REFUGEES FROM CAMEROON
Abuja Nigeria, 10 August 2017**

Final Joint Communiqué

1. At the invitation of the Honourable Minister of Interior of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Lt. Gen. (Rtd) Abdulrahman Bello Dambazau CFR PhD, the Tripartite Commission for the Voluntary Repatriation of Nigerian refugees living in Cameroon met in Abuja on 10 August 2017 to discuss the modalities for the implementation of the Tripartite Agreement signed on 2 March 2017 between the Governments of Nigeria and Cameroon, and UNHCR in Yaoundé, Cameroon.
2. The meeting, hosted by Lt. Gen. (Rtd) Abdulrahman Bello Dambazau CFR PhD, Honourable Minister of Interior of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was attended by His Excellency, Mr. René Emmanuel Sadi, Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization of the Republic of Cameroon; and the Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Nigeria, Mr. Antonio Jose Canhandula in the presence of other members of the Commission.
3. The meeting acknowledged the political stability of Nigeria, arising from sustained democratic principles and tenets since the return to civil rule in 1999, and the increase in allocation of resources to combat internal insecurity and the insurgency in the North East exacerbated by external interventions. The security situation had largely improved with the degrading of the Boko Haram sect with the active participation and cooperation of the Multi-National Joint Task Force comprising Benin, Cameroon, Chad Niger and Nigeria.
4. The response of Cameroon anchored on the spirit of brotherhood and very cordial fraternal relationship with Nigeria was the warm reception of Nigerians fleeing the insurgency. This however came at a huge cost as there was an increase in suicide bombings and general insecurity occasioned by Boko Haram infiltration, stretching beyond limits of humanitarian assistance, conflicts with local populace with regard to destruction of farmlands and cattle and allegations of commission of violent crimes.
5. The Commission took note of the need to strengthen cooperation in the management of the return process in line with the provisions of the Tripartite Agreement, the protection of the fundamental rights of the returnees and ensuring compliance with all international conventions on asylum and durable solutions.
6. *Recognizing* the current security challenges in Nigeria and efforts by the Government of Nigeria to restore basic social services to facilitate the repatriation and reintegration of returnees to Nigeria, the Commission noted that sustainable reintegration requires a holistic and community-based approach that would improve absorption capacity and enhance access to basic services and self-reliance for returnees, internally displaced persons and local communities in Nigeria.
7. The Commission directed the Technical Working Group to conclude concrete operational modalities and support measures, including setting the timetable and procedures to ensure the safe, dignified, voluntary return and sustainable reintegration of Nigerian refugees from Cameroon.
8. The Commission further directed the Technical Working Group to develop a phased-approach for organized return from Cameroon to Nigeria in a reasonable time frame based on the security situation in Nigeria's North-East and the restoration of basic services to ensure that returns are sustainable and conducted in safety and dignity.

9. To make returns durable, the Commission requested that individual returnee packages, community-driven Quick Impact Projects targeting rehabilitation and the extension of basic services and infrastructure be implemented in synergy with ongoing humanitarian and development actions.
10. The Commission also recognized the need for similar initiatives to strengthen the resilience of impacted host communities in Cameroon; the need for Quick Impact Projects to ensure livelihoods are not adversely affected; and to undertake environmental restoration where necessary.
11. The Commission called on the international community to support the Governments of Cameroon and Nigeria, as well as UNHCR to enhance delivery of protection and assistance to refugees in Cameroon, while arrangements and measures are being taken to facilitate their voluntary repatriation.
12. The Commission committed to actively engage various bilateral and multilateral development partners to raise the necessary funds and resources to facilitate the repatriation and restoration programmes.
13. The Commission agreed to meet to review the work of the Technical Working Group and progress made on the decisions of the Commission and the voluntary repatriation of Nigerian refugees from Cameroon on a date and place to be communicated through diplomatic channels.
14. The Honourable Minister of Interior of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, on behalf of the Government and People of Nigeria, thanked Cameroon for the hospitality towards Nigerian refugees and recognized the difficulties faced by Cameroon in balancing their national security with the protection of Nigerian refugees.
15. Finally, His Excellency, Mr. René Emmanuel Sadi, Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization thanked the Nigerian officials for the hospitality accorded him and the members of his delegation during their stay in Abuja.

Done at Abuja, on the 10th day of August 2017



Lt. Gen. (Rtd) Abdulrahman Bello Dambazau, CFR PhD
Honourable Minister of Interior

For: The Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria



H.E. René Emmanuel Sadi
Minister of Territorial Administration &
Decentralization

For: The Government of the Republic of Cameroon



Mr. Antonio Jose Canhandula

For: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)