

CALL FOR ACTION in Northern Nigeria

West and Central Africa Regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (August 2016)

This year, 2.5 million children under five in northern Nigeria¹ will suffer from severe acute malnutrition, 5.8 million people is urgently need food and livelihood assistance. The West and Central Africa Regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group calls on the entire international community to step up and respond in order to prevent it from deteriorating further.

FOR DONORS

- Urgently provide **sufficient, flexible and predictable resources** in a timely manner to meet immediate needs, save lives and avoid further deterioration of the humanitarian situation;
- Strengthen **coordination within the donor community** to ensure funding gaps for critical sectors are addressed;
- Finance and promote **innovative and flexible approaches to programs and operations** to enable partners to respond quickly in the fluid context and to changes in humanitarian access.

FOR NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

- Reinforce **humanitarian coordination** - at both Federal and State Level - to identify needs and gaps, orient operational partners and adapt responses;
- Facilitate **safe access of humanitarian actors** to populations in all areas, including currently inaccessible areas, while maintaining respect for humanitarian principles;
- **Scale up national response and capacity** to address the severity of the crisis including increased domestic funding and national budget allocation for the response.

FOR PARTNERS (INGOs, NGOs, UN AGENCIES)

- Implement **cross sectoral surveys/comprehensive assessments** to better understand the situation;
- **Strengthen coordination mechanisms, including dissemination of results of assessments/surveys** and any other information among humanitarian partners;
- **Mobilize additional capacity and extend operational coverage** in northern Nigeria in order to meet urgent needs.

Background and Access

Acute malnutrition and food insecurity represent long-term structural problems in Northern Nigeria. However, the fragile nutrition situation among the most vulnerable population has, over the last three years, translated into a complex crisis as a result of the Boko Haram armed conflict. Since May 2013, the **Boko Haram conflict** has destroyed infrastructure such as health clinics, dramatically eroded livelihoods and **triggered the displacement of over 2 million people, out of which 1.4 million people are in Borno State** (IOM, DTM June 2016). Displacements and restricted access to fields and pastures have led to the loss of productive assets, including of basic agricultural inputs. This is of major concern as the majority of crisis-hit populations rely on farming, cattle breeding, fishing, and trading activities for their food and income.

The current economic crisis in Nigeria is further fueling the complex emergency. **Households face high food prices due to the devaluation of the Nigerian Naira and removal of the fuel subsidy.** With food prices increasing without corresponding wage increases and with disruption to income generation, household purchasing power is deteriorating. Large proportions of households have exhausted their resources and are in an increasingly precarious situation. In Kano (north central Nigeria), **millet prices are nearly 80 percent higher than this time last year**, and the value of sorghum has more than doubled since May of last year.

As a result, food insecurity is widespread across **Northern Nigeria and over 5.8 million people² are in crisis and in need of urgent humanitarian assistance.**

While most Northern states in Nigeria are fully accessible, humanitarian access remains extremely limited in some areas of Borno State and insecurity is impacting on the functioning of many markets. It is estimated that **2.2 million people in Borno cannot be reached by humanitarian actors** due to the security situation. On July 28, 2016, an attack on a United Nations aid convoy traveling from Bama to Maiduguri in Borno State injured 2 aid workers and demonstrated the ongoing risks and complexity of providing humanitarian assistance.

Since April 2016, **15 previously inaccessible local government areas³ (LGAs) in Borno and Yobe have opened up**, enabling humanitarian needs assessments to take place. According to the Government of Nigeria, approximately **750,000 people in these newly accessible areas have urgent unmet humanitarian needs⁴.**

¹ Its includes in the Northern Nigeria the 12 States of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara

² Population in phase 3 and above from Cadre Harmonise analysis on March and updated on August 2016

³ Including Bama, Damboa, Dikwa, Monguno LGAs in Borno State, as well as Gujba and Gulani LGAs in Yobe State

⁴ Source is IOM, NEMA/SEMA, UNOCHA (June-July 2016)

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Food security

In May 2016, an **Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA)** conducted in Maiduguri (Borno State) by WFP, FEWS NET and the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) showed that **65.7 percent of IDPs are food insecure**, of which **6.2 percent are severely food insecure**. Even within host populations, 40.8 percent are food insecure, of which 4.8 percent are severely food insecure. Initial results of *mVAM*, covering Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states, indicate that the **proportion of food insecure households has increased from 33 percent to 38 percent in the 4 months between February/March and June/July, 2016**.

In July, the CILSS, FAO, FEWS NET and WFP issued an alert which raised “the possibility that a Famine (*Cadre Harmonisé/Integrated Food Security Phase Classification - CH/IPC Phase 5*) could be occurring in the worst affected and less accessible pockets of Borno state”. In August 2016, after **review of *Cadre Harmonisé* analysis** of the three North-eastern Nigeria States (Borno, Yobe and Adamawa), the number of people in food and nutrition insecurity from March 2016 *Cadre Harmonisé* analysis was updated and showed that **5.8 million people are in need of food and livelihoods assistance, including 65 000 people in Famine situation in Borno and Yobe State**.

The results of the latest Households Economic Analysis (HEA) conducted by Save the Children in July 2016 show that the deteriorating food security situation is not only found in the conflict affected areas but also in North West and North Central Nigeria. **Here, very poor households within seven livelihood zones in the states of Bauchi, Jigawa, Katsina and Zamfara are expected to face survival deficits in the coming months**.

Malnutrition

As of mid-2016, the burden of **Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM)** has been re-estimated by the Nutrition Cluster⁵. **More than 7 million children under five are suffering from acute malnutrition nationally, of these 2.5 million children suffer from the most severe form of malnutrition (SAM)**.

At least 89 percent of children with SAM- meaning more than 2.2 million - live in the 12 northern states of Nigeria, which are accessible by aid actors, except certain areas of Borno. In addition, almost 3 million lactating and pregnant women are at risk of acute malnutrition.

Nutrition partners are becoming increasingly concerned by the severity of the nutritional situation, especially as Northern Nigeria is already in the **lean season (June-October)**. In addition, the **rainy season** has started, bringing with it an increased **risk of malaria and cholera** that poses a serious threat to the already deteriorating nutritional status of children and women. **Measles cases** have already appeared in some areas and could also negatively impact the nutritional status of children <59 months.

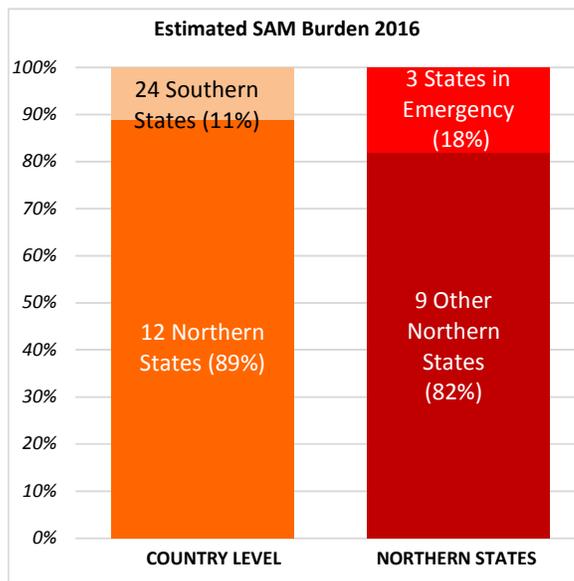
Recent exhaustive screening carried out in Borno State (satellite camps of Monguno Dikwa and Bama) revealed extremely high proxy GAM rates, ranging from 32 percent to 58.8 percent⁶. As a result, on June 27th, the Nigerian Minister of Health **declared a nutrition emergency in Borno State**. Furthermore, **preliminary results of a Nutrition survey (SMART Method)** conducted in June 2016 in **Jakusko LGA⁷ (Yobe State)** revealed a GAM rate of 20.3 percent and a SAM rate of 8.9 percent indicating an emergency situation.

Despite extreme conditions in terms of security, accessibility, and primary health services in the 12 Northern states, **almost 245,000 SAM children under five accessed treatment between January and July 2016**. 30 percent of those or 71,000 children are living in the 3 conflict affected North Eastern states.

As of July 2016, **available funds can only meet the needs of 610,000⁸ out of the 2.5 million children requiring treatment for SAM**. Without additional assistance, 128 children risk dying every day in Borno State, the equivalent of five children dying every hour.

The **scale-up of nutrition prevention activities targeting over 152,000 infants and young children**, combined with the provision of household food assistance, **is urgently needed to reduce child under-nutrition and related mortality**; especially in the most vulnerable conflict affected areas of Borno and Yobe states.

Nutrition prevention rations to prevent further deterioration of the nutrition situation in the most food insecure areas will be distributed to **175,000 children 6-23 months**.



⁵ Using a different incidence factor (9 instead of 2.6 for SAM, and 2.6 instead of 1.6 for MAM) which takes into account the overall context of deprivation and also based on the total number of children already admitted in nutritional program

⁶ Nutrition in emergency sector exhaustive screening data.

⁷ Nutrition and measles vaccination coverage survey using SMART methodology, MSF-Spain, May 2016

⁸ According to UNICEF estimates