**Facts & Figures**

- Most populous African country with **over 170 million inhabitants**
- **9.5 million people** affected by conflict & natural disasters
- **4.2 million people** food insecure

**Malnutrition:**
- **1.7 million children** suffer from acute malnutrition – out of them **500,000 are severely malnourished**

**AGIR**, an EU backed alliance for resilience in West Africa, strives to achieve Zero Hunger by 2032.

**European Commission’s humanitarian assistance:** €7.5 million for emergency needs in 2014

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**Key messages**

- Nigeria has the highest number of acutely malnourished children in West Africa. Despite a gradual increase in the number of children that are being treated, more efforts are needed by the Nigerian authorities and donors to scale up the prevention and management of malnutrition.
- There is an urgent need for a better assessment of humanitarian needs in the northeast of the country where a state of emergency is in force. Humanitarian capacity to provide assistance and protection for victims of the armed conflict should be increased. Non-compliance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL) by all parties to the conflict is a major concern.
- The preparedness and response with regard to floods and epidemics could be improved by building the capacities of communities regularly affected and of Nigeria’s emergency management agency.
- Given the high number of Nigerians affected by various crises, an approach linking relief with development (LRRD) and with ongoing resilience initiatives, has to be considered right from the start, during the design of relief programmes.
- The European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department ECHO has provided relief aid to the country since the Sahel food crisis starting in 2010, ensuring emergency food assistance and community management of acute malnutrition as well as health and protection services to displaced people and victims of conflict. In 2014, ECHO has allocated €7.5 million to help those most in need, with nutrition, health, protection and response to disasters and epidemics as top priorities.
Humanitarian situation and needs

Nigeria is Africa’s most populous country and the continent’s leading oil producer. The country’s booming economic growth conceals however extreme poverty and rapidly widening income disparity, with the North being increasingly left behind in development. The geographic, economic, ethnic, and sectarian divisions have traditionally fostered clashes in the country, with currently three main axes of on-going conflict. In the North, a radicalisation of jobless youths can be witnessed with the emergence of terror groups like Boko Haram. In the Middle Belt, inter-communal conflict over access to land and resources is going on, with numerous incidents having led to casualties and displacement in past years. Ethnic and political unrest has continued to persist in the oil-rich Niger Delta with competition for oil wealth fostering clashes between ethnic groups. It is however the northeast of the country which has seen the most violent clashes in recent times. The government declared a state of emergency in May 2013 in the states of Borno, Yobo and Adamawa which coincided with military action in an effort to quell the Boko Haram insurgency. The group’s indiscriminate and deadly attacks continue however unabated on a daily basis. More than 55 000 people have been registered as refugees or returnees in the neighbouring countries of Niger, Chad and Cameroon, with large numbers being internally displaced in Nigeria. The high level of insecurity and the risk of kidnapping are an impediment to humanitarian organisations operating on the ground and carrying out in-depth needs assessments.

In 2014, 4.2 million Nigerians will be food insecure. With 1.7 million children under five suffering from acute malnutrition, Nigeria accounts for the largest caseload of malnourished children in Africa. Infant and maternal mortality rates nationwide have deteriorated in recent years and indicators are particularly poor in the 11 northern Sahel states which have low vaccination coverage and high prevalence of diarrhoea and acute malnutrition. 2 out of the 3 states under state of emergency (Borno and Yobe) have reached crisis levels of food insecurity well before the peak of the so-called lean season (between June and August). The 2012 Nigeria floods caused large-scale damage to crops disrupting national markets. Combined with the escalating violence in the North East, the local and regional markets and agricultural production are increasingly disrupted having a negative effect on the regional economy as well, in particular food markets, as Nigeria is the “food basket” of the Sahel. Despite better harvests in 2013, food prices continue to be well above average.

Floods and outbreaks such as cholera, polio and measles are common and recurrent in Nigeria. Many cases go unreported. A cholera epidemic with has the northern states of Kano and Bauchi as epicentres affected 6600 people and left 229 dead in 2013. The epidemic continues in 2014 and is spreading to neighbouring countries. Capable of managing medium-size outbreaks, Nigeria’s health authorities have however accepted assistance to deal with the cholera outbreak in Bauchi state and also receive support from UNICEF and WHO in terms of essential supplies and to better detect new cases.

The European Union’s Humanitarian Response

Given the immensity of needs by sheer numbers of people affected and the difficulty for organisations to operate in the north of the country, the response to the various crises in Nigeria remains a challenge.

The Commission’s humanitarian aid and civil protection service (ECHO) has funded humanitarian partners since the 2010 Sahel food crisis in order to improve the community management of acutely malnourished children and to provide emergency food assistance in northern Nigeria. ECHO’s increasing support for nutrition care has contributed to the recognition of malnutrition as a public health issue by the Nigerian authorities which have now requested for assistance in developing expertise and setting up an integrated malnutrition case management system. With its partners, ECHO has contributed to the scaling up of nutrition care for acutely malnourished children, from 40 000 in 2010 to over 235 000 in 2013.

The Commission also supports assistance to victims of violence in the Borno, Yobo and Adamawa states where a state of emergency is in force. Assistance in terms of nutrition and health care is being provided to people, both Nigerians and returnees, who have sought refuge across the border in Niger.

Following the 2012 floods, which displaced 7 million people, the Commission contributed €3 million to help vulnerable families rebuild their homes and livelihoods. Interventions to improve water, sanitation and hygiene were also funded in an effort to reduce the risk of disease outbreaks such as cholera. The Commission has allocated €7.5 million in humanitarian aid for Nigeria in 2014. For the sake of coherence and continuity, health and nutrition have also been included as priority sectors in the programming of the Commission’s 11th European Development Funding (EDF, 2014-2020).