PRESS RELEASE

Nigeria’s bankers unite in support of Nigeria’s most vulnerable in a visit to IDP camps in Maiduguri

Maiduguri, 18 June 2019 – Some of Nigeria’s leading bank executives came together to show solidarity with their fellow Nigerians affected by the ongoing crisis in Borno State. In a collective visit to two camps for internally displaced people in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, companies and banks that are part of the Nigeria Humanitarian Fund – Private Sector Initiative reiterated their commitment to the humanitarian response and taking ownership of it.

“These are our people, this is our country, and this is our problem. As much as we are getting help from the rest of the world, we must be able to find solutions for our own people. As a Nigerian, the people I met here today are our brothers, our sisters and our children, and I don’t wish to see any single one of them living in the conditions we saw here today,” said Mrs. Ibukun Awosika, Chairmain of First Bank of Nigeria Limited.

“That gives us the impetus and the drive to take the situation more seriously than we ever did. Our vision is beyond what our companies can do. Our goal is to get every single Nigerian to own this situation,” she concluded.

Mrs. Awosika led a delegation that included Mr. Biyi Olagbami, Executive Director of Ecobank, Mr. Kyari Bukar, Co-Chair of the NHF PSI Steering Group, and Mr. Olumide Akpata, Senior Partner of Templars Law Firm, among others, to Maiduguri where they met and interacted with displaced men, women and children who are bearing the brunt of the ten-year conflict in Nigeria’s north-east.

As the protracted crisis continues, Nigeria’s private sector is stepping into the realm of humanitarian response and has pledged to contribute resources and identify collaborative avenues to address the humanitarian needs of more the 7.1 million people in need across Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states.

They joined the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, Mr. Edward Kallon, who emphasized the crucial role Nigeria’s private sector has to play in driving forward effective solutions.

“The Nigerian Humanitarian Fund Private Sector Initiative is an innovative platform to foster effective collaboration between the UN, the Government of Nigeria and leading Nigerian
business. We are here today to see how we can work with them to mobilize action and resources to meet the needs of the displaced people in north-east Nigeria,” said Edward Kallon, United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for Nigeria.

This second visit of private sector leaders to Borno State was part of the Nigeria Humanitarian Fund-Private Sector Initiative (NHF-PSI). The NHF-PSI is a ground-breaking global initiative created in Nigeria and managed by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on behalf of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator. The initiative will see Nigerian companies join donor countries in pooling donations and resources together. The platform aims to create a more collaborative and effective response by bringing awareness to the ongoing humanitarian crisis – one of the most severe in the world – which is predominantly affecting women and children.

Fourteen of Nigeria's leading companies signed up to the initiative launched in Lagos in November 2018, which will harness their financial resources, innovative capacity and entrepreneurial drive in support of the humanitarian response. The NHF-PSI offers a measurable and accountable platform for companies to pool their resources together to more effectively transform the lives of millions of their fellow Nigerians.

To date, the Nigeria Humanitarian Fund has raised $90 million in contributions and pledges, thanks to the generous support of seventeen donor countries, and aspires to raise $80 million from the private sector. The unique collaboration presents an unprecedented opportunity for Nigerian businesses to lead the way in bringing Nigerians together for Nigeria.

For further information, please contact:

Leni Kinzli, Public Information Officer, OCHA Nigeria, +234 (0) 906 246 2630, kinzli@un.org

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