



**For the attention of the participants of the International Conference on Lake Chad, Oslo, 24 February 2017**

Excellencies,

We, international humanitarian organizations working in the Lake Chad Basin, would like to take the opportunity of the International Conference on Lake Chad to express our deep concern about the dire food security and nutrition situation in the region.

In the most populated region of Africa, the future of an entire generation is at risk.

Across the Lake Chad region, levels of maternal and child mortality and undernutrition are alarming. In Nigeria, every year 750 000 children die before their fifth birthday. In Chad, 4% of children die within their first month. Malaria and diarrheal diseases are endemic. While SMART surveys conducted in previous years show high malnutrition rates throughout northern Nigeria and the region, the conflict has further exacerbated an already precarious situation. In 2016, less than half children suffering from severe acute malnutrition received the necessary treatment in the four countries. In 2017, 540,000 children are expected to suffer from severe acute malnutrition across the Lake Chad Basin. This includes 450,000 children in Nigeria's three most affected states alone.

Malnourished children are less likely to attend school and to become productive members of society. Malnourished girls, in particular, risk becoming yet another malnourished mother, thus contributing to the

intergenerational cycle of malnutrition. Most importantly, undernutrition makes children more vulnerable to common childhood diseases. Severely wasted children are at immediate risk of dying – their chances of dying from common childhood diseases are 11.4% higher. Besides, undernutrition also has both long lasting human costs (cerebral and physical growth delay) and economic consequences (losses of up to 45 percent of an individual's income).

In their Statement “Seven Steps to Saving Lives and Assisting People in Nigeria and Lake Chad Basin”, NGOs are calling for a scale-up of efforts on food, nutrition and health in Nigeria and the region. This scale-up is critical to support families struggling to feed their kids and to prevent them from adopting harmful coping mechanisms. Ensuring a safe, peaceful and prosperous future for the people of the Lake Chad Basin region requires more than a military solution. Immediate food and nutrition assistance, coupled with sustainable livelihood solutions, including agriculture and livestock support, for the displaced and their generous host communities, are necessary to reduce reliance on aid and restore trust among communities. The survival and recovery of the most vulnerable also requires building the resilience of communities, basic services and health systems, to address the situation.

We commend the involvement of Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon and the international community in this conference and we hope that investments will be made to ensure that children of the region do indeed have a future.

**Action Against Hunger**

**Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Network (SUN CSN)**

**International Rescue Committee**

**Mercy Corps**

**Catholic Relief Services**

**Oxfam**

**Helen Keller International**

**Croix Rouge française**