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# NorthEast Watch

TARABA



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Pushing the frontiers for a **NEW** dawn

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## EDITORIAL: Now is the Time for Stock Taking



TOWARDS the end of last year, the Presidential Committee on North-East Initiatives (PCNEI) tried to organize a National Conference on the North-East. The objective was to allow Nigerians to develop a collective road map for the restoration and rebuilding of the region that has been battered by Boko Haram insurgency. The initiative never saw the light, as a result, engagement with the rebuilding and reconstruction of the region as well as the resettlement of internally displaced persons have been more on adhoc basis than in a well-planned manner. But it is not only the PCNEI that is working on adhoc basis. Virtually everyone from the President, to Governors, International Development Partners, Civil Society Organizations and Philanthropies are all working on adhoc basis because government has failed to bring all to a planning table to harmonize and synergize efforts.

Consequent upon this lack of proper coordination and synergy, stakeholders keep working at cross purpose. Even within government, this is visible. It is this lack of comprehensive plan and coordination that has led to instances of corruption and pilfering of relief materials and probably in the delivery of many reconstruction programs.

More than a year since it was established, the PCNEI has not come up with a comprehensive roadmap and rebuilding plan for the region. The North-East Development Commission initiative of the National Assembly is yet to see the light as the bill is still to be sent for assent by the president. Nigeria has probably the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest number of IDPs in the world and still has no policy on IDPs!

It should be acknowledge that the military campaign has been recording success in the effort to rid the region of the Boko Haram insurgents. But this success means that

communities are liberated, the stories of humanitarian crisis are multiplying. Hunger and starvation are already a sad reality in those communities. Lack of proper care, extortion and even abuse are forcing many IDPs to leave camps and return to their liberated communities without the necessary infrastructure and with no security cover.

Only recently a number of IDPs who returned to their community near Chibok were attacked and some of them killed by the insurgents. The military said they returned on their own without waiting for security infrastructure to be put in place. But that is precisely the point that lack of a coordinated plan portents: This is why we at the North East Watch (NEW) strongly believe that now is the time to convene an all stakeholders National Conference on the North-East. We call on the PCNEI to spearhead the effort and bring it to fruition. We also urge the National Assembly to support such convening, given that in the past the National Assembly had called for the convening of such a conference. We again call on the international development and humanitarian community to support and join hands with national stakeholders to quickly convene such a conference to address urgent humanitarian emergencies as well as plan in a more coordinated manner the rebuilding and reconstruction of the North-East region.

The president has great responsibility in this. He must show not only concern but proactive leadership by working with plans and clear deliverables and targets that are time bound. We call on the president to as a matter of urgency to reconstitute the PCNEI to make it more effective, functional and more committed to working for results.



## UNICEF increases its funding appeal to provide life-saving assistance for children in the North-East

The United Nations Children's Fund UNICEF has revised its humanitarian appeal for Nigeria from US\$55 million to US\$115 million to assist an additional 750,000 people who can now be reached across conflict-affected areas in the northeastern part of the country.

As new areas open up to humanitarian assistance, the true scale of the Boko Haram related crisis and its impact on children is being revealed.

An estimated 400,000 children under five will suffer from severe acute malnutrition in three states across the northeast this year. More than 4 million people are facing severe food shortages and 65,000 people are living in famine-like conditions, mostly in Borno, the worst affected state.

"Children's lives are literally hanging by a thread," said Afshan Khan, UNICEF's Director of Emergency Programmes. "We are reaching new areas to provide critical humanitarian assistance but we need greater international support to further scale up and reach all children in dire need," she added.

The destruction of whole towns and villages further complicates the response. Sixty percent of health clinics have been partially or completely destroyed and 75 percent of water and sanitation facilities require rehabilitation in Borno state.

Nearly one million children are now displaced across the northeast, a million are out of school and hundreds of thousands psychologically affected from the horrors they have lived through.

The conflict-related lack of access to children has also led to an outbreak of polio in Borno state, where three cases of wild polio virus were

confirmed in August and September. UNICEF's funding appeal comes as a series of massive coordinated emergency polio immunisation and nutrition campaigns in northeast and neighbouring countries is underway, targeting 1.8 million children in Borno state alone.

The immunisation campaign is also identifying and treating children with severe malnutrition. UNICEF has increased its response in the areas worst-affected by the Boko Haram conflict since

April, supporting basic health care and nutrition for children and mothers, and helping provide safe water and sanitation, child protection services and learning opportunities.

Since the beginning of 2016, 2.6 million conflicted-affected people have been given access to UNICEF-supported preventative healthcare

services and nearly 75,000 children have been treated for severe acute malnutrition in the region. The construction and rehabilitation of boreholes has provided nearly half a million people with improved access to safe water. Safe learning spaces, teacher training and educational supplies have helped over 72,000 children to restart their education and some 133,000 children have been provided with psychosocial support.

To date, just US\$ 28 million of the US\$ 115 million appeal has been received and this presents a serious obstacle to UNICEF's scale up plan.





# PHOTO NEWS

The Social Accountability in the Education Sector in the North-East region which Center for Information Technology and Development (CITAD) anchors, has conducted a three-day capacity building workshop for its cluster members. The participants who comprised representatives of various CSOs were engaged in a three day rigorous training on Public Awareness, Innovation and Social Media. The event took place between 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> September 2016 at Custodian Hotel, Gombe, Gombe state. Have a look at the event in pictures below.





# INTERVIEW

The insurgents' activities in the northeast have in the past brought the education sector almost to a standstill, forcing the closure of many schools and the teachers to flee. As normalcy gradually returns to the region, efforts are geared towards reviving the education sector and the welfare of the internally displaced persons in Yobe state as Honourable Shu'aibu Danladi Hamza explains in this interview with our correspondent Dauda Muhammad Gombe in Damaturu, the Yobe state capital, excerpts:

**Question:** Can you briefly tell us about yourself?

**Response:** *My name is Shu'aibu Danladi Hamza Honorable Member representing Nguru Central Constituency Yobe State House of Assembly and Chairman House Committee on Education.*

**Question:** The National Assembly has been debating the North-East Development Commission Bill: What is your take on that?

**Response:** *Actually the bill is timely considering the situation in the northeast, looking at the situation of the insurgency in North-East. So there is need for a bill at least for reconstruction and rebuilding of the affected areas. Therefore, this bill as I said is timely and I urge the National Assembly to speed up the passage of the bill so that it will become a law in order to actually enhance the implementation.*



**Mon. Shu'aibu Danladi Hamza**

**Question:** What role do you see for the state legislature in terms of reconstruction and rebuilding agenda of the states affected by the insurgency?

**Response:** *The house has set up a committee on IDPs in order to look at their day to day affairs as well as what actually is going on in IDP camps. Recently the*

*committee visited the Deputy Governor who is heading the state level committee on IDPs.*

**Question:** One of the functions of the legislature is oversight: how has the House been discharging this in respect to the education sector?

**Response:** *Education being a very vast and vital sector*

*and also the key to every societal development requires that all members be involved in a quest to make it more efficient, when more hands are joined and vital inputs are made I think the sector will function as expected.*

**Question:** What role do you see for civil society organizations in helping you discharge this oversight function?

**Response:** *Civil society organizations play very vital roles, most especially in assisting the legislature to carry out its responsibilities, because they have more eyes especially in programs and policies in the state and they look at the government, legislature and even the judiciary.*

**Question:** Different states have different problems affecting their education sector, what in particular is the key challenge(s) of Yobe state's education sector?

**Response:** *The fundamental problem in the state is lack of qualified and professional teachers and funding.*

**Question:** Can you give us a sense of the measures put in place to address these challenges?

**Response:** *The governor became worried and then set up a committee to trace the root of the matter, report short, mid and long term measures so that the issue will be tackled. The house has also formed a committee that comprised every member, and demand that everyone goes back to his or her constituency to ascertain the problem of education ranging from primary to tertiary level. The ad-hoc committee under the leadership of Deputy Speaker recommended that N.C.E, B. Ed holders be posted to teach in the schools and where appropriate, advised government to channel more funds to the education sector in order to address such challenges, train teachers and give them motivations and hardship allowances and collaborate with civil society organizations in terms of awareness campaign encouraging people to send their children to schools especially in the rural areas.*



**Question:** Some experts believe that education sector is such an integral and diverse field that demands a multi-faceted approach, do you share this view or you have a different perspective?

**Response:** *Yes I share the same view*

**Question:** Some states have declared a state of emergency in their education sector following their poor performance, is Yobe state thinking of doing the same?

**Response:** *Yobe state has declared state of emergency in education sector only that it has not been fully or officially pronounced, but soon the governor will make official announcement and concrete actions will follow*

**Question:** What are the measures taken by the Committee/House to discuss this problem with The Executive and make sure that this is not repeated in the coming year?

**Response:** *A committee was set up, after carrying out their assignment they submitted a report to the executive.*

**Question:** How do you see the problem of IDPs in Yobe state and the entire northeast in general?

**Response:** *Recently we had a meeting with the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) in to discuss issues related to the internally displaced persons. The IDPs are not from Yobe but from other states of northeast, IDPs from Yobe have gone back to their respective communities to carry on with their normal life and with the interventions of Dangote foundation and other donors we are making serious efforts to help them. And peace has been restored.*



## Conflict ravaged North-East drawn back by 70 years in education-UN



The Boko Haram insurgency has set back Nigeria's North-East by at least 70 years in education development, killing 611 teachers and forcing an estimated 952,029 children to flee schools, the United Nations said. "As of 2015 in Nigeria, where Boko Haram has targeted education workers and students, at least 611 teachers had been deliberately killed and 19,000 forced to flee since 2009," the UN said in a media advisory ahead of public presentation on the 2016 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report in Nigeria scheduled to hold first week of October. The advisory, released to the media by a UN official Oluseyi Soremekun in the Nigerian capital Abuja, said up to 910 schools have been destroyed while 1,500 have been shut in the wake of the violence.

GEM report shows individual country's progress in the attainment of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. It said the violence has dragged the northeast down the ladder in the push for the goal by at least 70 years, compared to other regions. "On current trends, universal primary education in sub-Saharan Africa will be achieved in 2080, while universal lower secondary completion will be achieved in 2089," the report said. "The universal upper secondary completion will be achieved in 2099. This will leave the (northeast) region 70 years late for the 2030 SDGs deadline."

UNICEF made similar observation last year in December when it said Boko Haram-related violence and attacks on civilian population have forced more than a million children out of school across Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger. The agency had said in a statement that the figure adds to the estimated 11 million children already out of school across the Lake Chad region.

"Across Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger, over 2,000 schools remain closed due to the conflict -- some of them for more than a year -- and hundreds have been attacked, looted or set on fire. In far north Cameroon, only one out of the 135 schools closed in 2014 has re-opened this year," the UNICEF said.

## North-East Youths: The Way Forward (i)

Youths are the driving force of any functional society, while other categories of people support the society with direction, foresight and intellectual inputs, the youths serve as the machinery through which every kind of positive goal might be achieved, hence they are never to be neglected or underutilized. It is obvious when the insurgency began in the northeast in 2009 it is the youths that gave it the manpower to flourish, it is obvious that Boko Haram itself targeted youths to promote its propaganda.

It is obvious that some gullible youths have answered the call of the insurgency idea because they felt the course was justifiable and then worth their while, it is obvious how some youths believed their parents were wrong trying to stop them from joining the insurgency, it is obvious how some youths heartlessly killed their parents simply because they objected their horrible ideology. However, it is crucial to note that eventually youths immensely contributed towards building resilience mechanism against any action of the insurgents in their villages and towns.

The damage done in the northeast is beyond what we hear or read in the news, some families have been completely eliminated, hundreds of children lost their parents, brothers and sisters who would have been the ones to take care of them. The destruction from several angles affects youths more than any category of people, because, one, the societal hope lies with them being its driving force, they man the industries, companies, markets, farms, public and private sector, that may probably be the reason women and children remain vulnerable as the youths become weakened.

When you carefully think about the aforementioned strengths and weaknesses of youths in the northeast, who do you blame? The youths themselves, the society, the governments, the well meaning individuals, the religious and traditional leaders, or all of them? Of course, it will be safe to apportion the blame on all of them, even though we can say there is a limit to which either of them can play their part. But, more importantly the youths are to blame in the first place, because they know what is good and bad for their lives, and they hold different ambitions and some of them are working towards realizing these ambitions, if this simple logic works for them I doubt if there is anything wrong with their thinking. You meet any youth on the street and ask him or her them the plan they have for their lives, you will be surprised how some of them will give you astonishing narratives. In that case, the 21<sup>st</sup> century youths need to demonstrate their ability to face challenging moments and stand against consequential actions that have prevailing threats. In whichever circumstance, youths must be wise enough to uphold the hope society bestowed on them, i.e the driving force, with your positive actions the society develops, prosper, and eventually be proud of you. Northeast youths must realize the region has suffered multiple injuries, therefore, it demands a lot from them, their resolve, commitment and determination will help heal and the see the region regain its prestige and eventually attain the lost glory and prosperity.

Send your reactions to [hamza4ib@gmail.com](mailto:hamza4ib@gmail.com) or text to +2348039467382

**Dan Auta**

Baba, they said peace is gradually returning to North-East

Yes, but unfortunately escorted by hunger



Sufyan'16



## Ireland Donates One Million Euros to Farmers in the North-East.

The government of Ireland has donated one million Euros to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations for the emergency seed and tools distribution programme to help farmers affected by the Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East return to farming.

The Irish Ambassador to Nigeria Mr. Sean Hoy disclosed this when he paid a courtesy call on the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Chief Audu Ogbah in Abuja recently.

Mr. Hoy said the funding is deliberate to support the process of normalization and his country wants to be the first to start the process because farmers cannot remain in IDP camps when there is a chance for them to return.

He said "the donation is the first step in the efforts to create gainful employment for the young people in the north east because when young people are not gainfully employed they become vulnerable to radicalization."



"Agriculture is the big part of the response the government got against this young people that don't have gainful employment if we can mobilise agriculture and if we can get the people involved in agriculture then those who want to radicalize them will not find it very easy" he added.

The Irish Ambassador said he was at the ministry of agriculture because his country cannot give support to the FAO without the ministry of agriculture, as the ministry is their implementing partner.

While responding, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Chief Audu Ogbah thanked the Irish Government for their support to the plight of the Boko Haram victims.

"Let me thank you for this donation of one million Euro through the FAO, we shall put it to the best use, we shall try and organise farmers to their farms as quickly as possible; we are discussing with the military to see if there is a need to demine some areas of the state so that farmers don't get blown up in an attempt to get back to their farms and we believe that in another six months to one year, reasonable normalcy will return to Borno state," Ogbah said.

He said the government needs to plan for the future of the IDPs, "we have to prepare for their economic livelihood, for their housing, for their well being, for industries to absorb them, we have prepared some of them to go into agriculture and agro industry so that they too can become proud Nigerians and have every reason to patriotic" he explained.

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