

PRESS STATEMENT BY PETER LUNDBERG
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(Maiduguri, Borno State: 25 October 2016) Nigeria is facing the worst humanitarian crisis on the African continent. Currently up to 400,000 children face starvation and citizens suffer with little or no access to clean water, health, protection, education and food security.

As I complete my first few weeks as the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator a.i., I want to assure the Government of Nigeria of the international humanitarian community's commitment to working closely with the federal and state mechanisms to accelerate our collective response. I welcome the recent announcement of the Inter-Ministerial Task Force and High Level Humanitarian Coordination Group, as well as the Borno State Humanitarian Response Committee and look forward to seeing a tangible impact in the coming weeks and months.

I appreciate all the humanitarian assistance provided by the government and the humanitarian community at large who face insecurity and access constraints to reach the millions in desperate need. Humanitarian organizations should continue to maintain neutrality, impartiality and independence and we will continue to work where security permits. Needs are currently higher than the response capacity and we must ensure that we have both access and resources to scale up our humanitarian support in the months to come.

We are grateful for the generosity of the UN Central Emergency Response Fund and the continued contributions of the wider donor community. However, the Nigerian Humanitarian Response Plan for 2016, which requires US\$484 for life-saving interventions, is less than 37 per cent funded. Without the means to respond, innocent boys, girls, women and men will die. The highest priority requirement for this response remains food security which is just 25 per cent funded.

I welcome the increase in air capacity with a second UN Humanitarian Air Service helicopter, transporting humanitarian workers and life-saving assistance to areas still inaccessible by road.

The attack on the humanitarian convoy on 28 July and more recent the suicide bombing in Maiduguri on 12 October serves as a stark reminder that we must not let down our guard in such a high risk environment. The security of humanitarian actors remains a top priority for the humanitarian community.

I look forward to leading the international humanitarian community in forging stronger relationships with our host government, as well as international and national non-government organizations, to support their valuable work and assist them with the necessary structures and mechanisms they require to safely carry out their work. Indeed recent, albeit limited improvements accessing displaced populations has created the opportunity for the establishment of field-based humanitarian hubs in selected Local Government Areas and I see this development as a springboard to continued improvements in access to affected populations.

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