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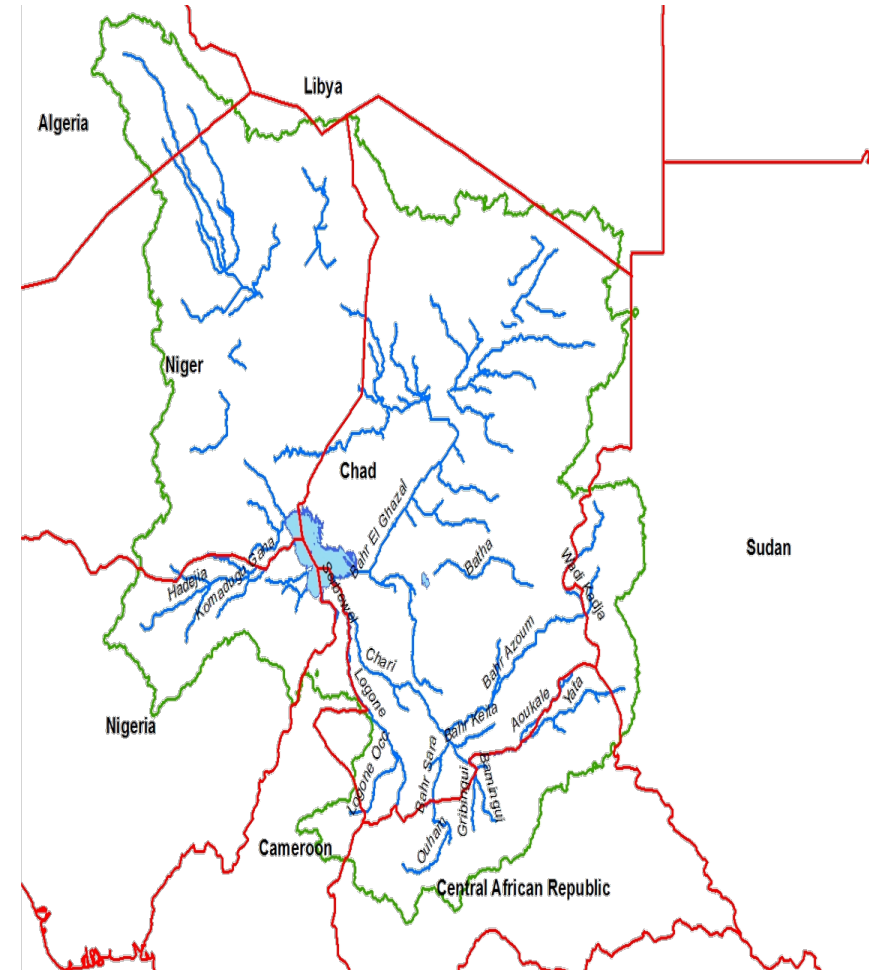


ROLE OF THE LAKE CHAD BASIN COMMISSION IN CONFLICT PREVENTION, EFFECTIVE TRANSBOUNDARY WATER COOPERATION, AND PREVENTION OF MIGRATION

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Introduction

- The Lake Chad is a freshwater lake, allowing the development of economic activities (fishing, farming and herding) as well as supporting the livelihoods of about 22 million people living in the conventional basin.
- Its surface area measured about 25,000 Km² in the early 1960s but shrunk to about 1,410 km² (lowest level in a hundred years), following two bouts of droughts from 1972-1975 and from 1982-1985. Since then, it has been gradually rising to about 8,000 Km² today.



Introduction cont'

- The Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) was established by the Fort Lamy Convention of 22 May 1964 by the four riparian countries of Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. The Central African Republic and Libya joined in 1994 and 2008, respectively.
- Sudan, Egypt, the Republic of Congo, and the Democratic Republic of Congo enjoy observer status. Membership of the Commission thus cuts across the West, Central and North Africa regions.
- The LCBC was primarily established for the prevention and resolution of conflicts over the waters of the Lake and its tributaries, and for the promotion of regional integration. This is clearly evident in its three-point mandate, its structures, and the functioning of its organs and their six subsidiary bodies. This brief will briefly touch on them.

MANDATE OF LCBC

To manage the waters of Lake Chad and the other trans-boundary water resources in the Lake Chad basin in a sustainable and equitable way

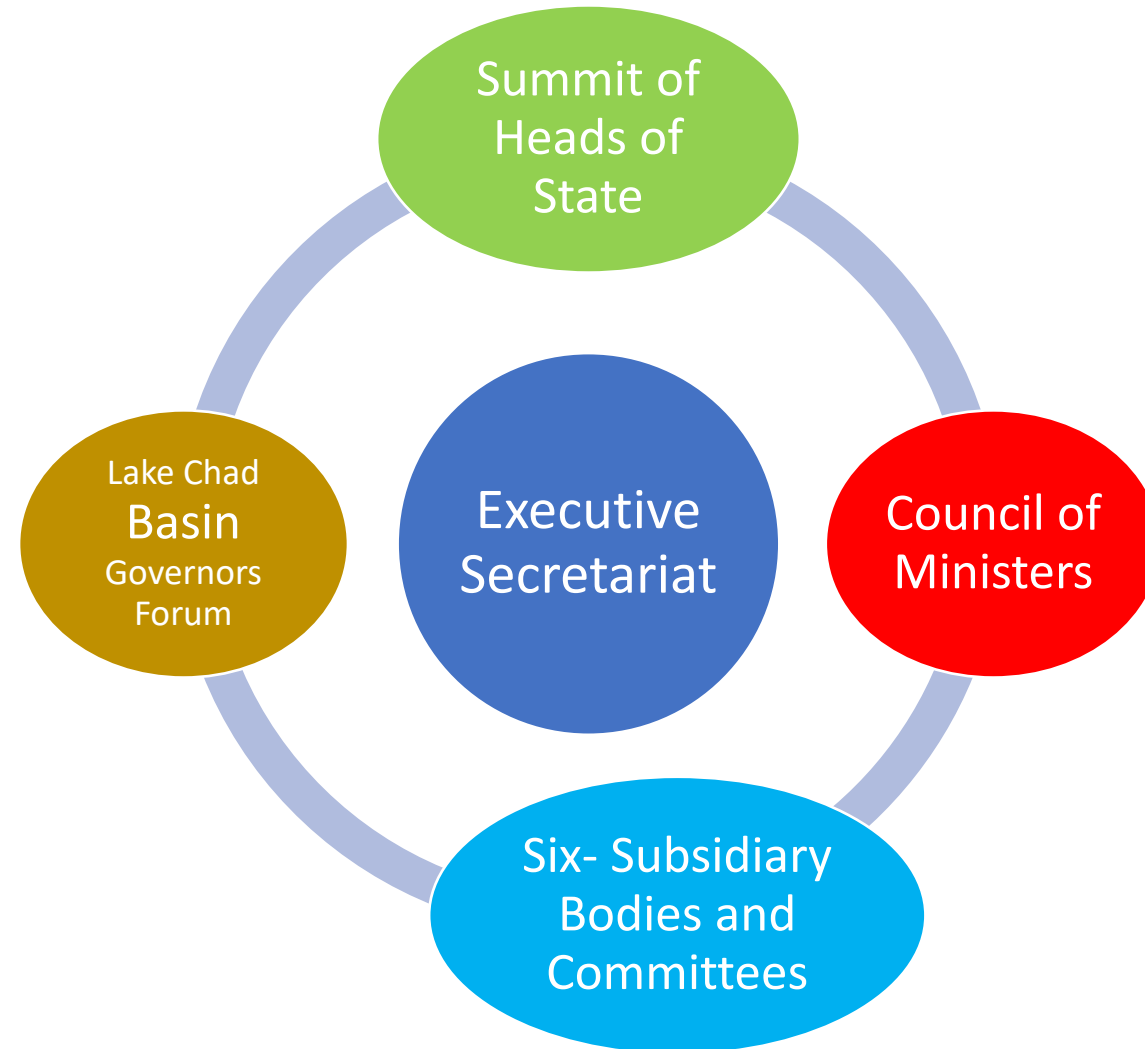
To conserve the ecosystem of the conventional basin

To promote regional integration and safeguard peace and security in the conventional basin.

Decision-Making Process and Operational Structure

- Decisions are arrived at in the Commission by consensus among member countries. This way, all member states must reach an agreement before a decision is arrived at. This is facilitated by the structure of the Commission, which allows for bottom-up approach at several layers of decision making.

STRUCTURE OF LCBC



Cooperation on Security Challenges

- The effects of climate change and demographic pressure have conspired to create security challenges in the Lake Chad Basin. The shrinking of the Lake and population explosion during the period from seven million in 1963 when the LCBC was created, to about 45 million, has resulted in the situation whereby far more people are competing for ever shrinking resources for their livelihood: farmlands, pastures, fishing area, all became increasingly scarce.

Impact of loss of means of livelihood in the Basin

Arms trafficking
and transboundary
smuggling
activities

Increased youth
recruitment by
armed terrorist
and bandit groups

Crossborder
transhumance and
increased farmer-
herder clashes

Over farming and
destruction of
vegetal cover

Youth migration in
search of greener
pasture outside
the basin

Conflict Prevention Mechanisms

- In anticipation of the above conflict scenarios, the LCBC adopted several strategies to prevent the emergence of conflicts among the communities and among member states. They include:
 - i. Periodic consultations at various levels of authority (experts, ministers and summit) to nip any problem in the bud;
 - ii. Sustainable development projects to reduce the level of poverty and desperation, especially among the youth;
 - iii. Regulatory provisions of the LCBC, which have inbuilt mechanisms for conflict prevention and settlement of disputes when they arise:

Prevention mechanisms

- A. **Fort Lamy Convention** of 22 May 1964 which created the LCBC, underscores the role of LCBC in the settlement of disputes among members regarding the interpretation or application of the Convention. Art. VII stipulates that if the Commission is not able to settle such disputes, they should be referred to the Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration Commission of the then Organisation of African Unity.
- B. In the **Water Charter** of the Lake Chad Basin Chapter 15 has been dedicated to the settlement of disputes among members.

- Art. 85: State **parties undertake to settle differences in a peaceful manner** in the event of dispute arising from the application or interpretation of the present Water Charter;
- Art. 86: Parties undertake to **settle disputes through direct negotiations**, conducted in good faith with a desire to come to an agreement;
- Art. 87: If the parties fail to come to an agreement after negotiation, any party shall **bring the case to the LCBC**, which should attempt to reach an agreement through the use of its good offices or mediation procedure;
- Art. 88: If the Commission fails to settle the matter, any party can approach **competent regional or sub-regional authorities**, which will use good offices or mediation procedure to settle the dispute;
- Art. 89: If all the above mechanisms fail to settle the dispute, the states should **take the case before the International Court of Justice** for arbitration or “judicial dispute settlement.”

Management of Open Conflict

- Notwithstanding the conflict prevention measures taken by the LCBC, a few incidents did occur between member countries. The period of drought of the 1980s and 1990s witnessed some disagreements over competing water claims. Due to the shrinking of the lake during this period, fishermen and herders from the drying part of the lake migrated to the wetter part which often led to confrontations among the people and between member states.

Management of Open Conflict Cont'

- The strategies adopted by the LCBC to manage the conflicts include:

Border Demarcation

- The boundaries between the four member countries were demarcated to minimise the disputes over territorial claims

Joint Border Patrols

- Faced with peace-threatening trans-border crimes which have been a source of friction between member countries, the LCBC, at various times, set up joint border patrols to address the situation

Peace Enforcement

- Boko Haram insurgency is a challenge facing all member states. Again, the LCBC rose to the challenge by facilitating the establishment of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) by affected member countries. This is another illustration of member state's resolve to pool their military might together to confront a common enemy for the common good.
- In line with the decisions by the LCBC member states, the AU PSC has authorized the MNJTF, within its area of operation, to:

Mandate of MNJTF

Create a safe and secure environment in the areas affected by the activities of Boko Haram and other terrorist groups, to significantly reduce violence against civilians and other abuses, including sexual and gender-based violence, in full compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law and the UN HRDDP (Human Rights Due Diligence Policy);

Facilitate the implementation of overall stabilization programmes by the LCBC Member States and Benin in the affected areas, including the full restoration of state authority and the return of IDPs and refugees

Facilitate, within the limit of its capabilities, humanitarian operations and the delivery of assistance to the affected populations

Regional Stabilization Strategy

- The LCBC is also spearheading the harmonisation of the stabilization efforts of the member countries affected by the Boko Haram insurgency by bringing them together to adopt a common regional stabilization strategy. The **Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience** of the Boko Haram affected areas was adopted by the Council of Ministers of the LCBC on 30 August 2018. It has 9 all-encompassing pillars and 40 strategic objectives.

Sustainable Development

Peace and security cannot be guaranteed in the basin until poverty and the other underlying factors that facilitate the acceptance and spread of the Boko Haram ideology are addressed, and until the post-conflict needs of the people are met through sustainable development programs. The LCBC is driving the post-conflict development efforts in the area to ensure peace and security and stem illegal migration.

Thank you very much!

