NIGER
Joint Steering Committee Progress Review

This summary is part of a progress review of seven priority countries carried out by the Joint Steering Committee to advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration.

Situational Analysis

Niger is ranked last in the Human Development Index, facing a combination of extreme poverty, high population growth, poor governance and low capacity. Crises afflicting both the South and West of the country further deteriorates the situation.

In Diffa, the intensity and expansion of Boko Haram activities since 2009 has led to massive internal and cross-border displacement, the destruction of livelihoods, properties, social ties and social fabric, human rights abuses, and the disruption of government institutions. Meanwhile, the worsening crisis in the Liptako-Gourma region is presenting new challenges due to insecurity and population displacement.

Tensions between the ruling party and the opposition have led to a political impasse which poses risks to the stability of the country and its capacity to cope with the deep social and security challenges.

The three border regions in the north, north-west and south-east regions of the country are particularly vulnerable to terrorism and spill-over from Mali, Libya and Nigeria and Burkina Faso. The rise in inter-communal violence along the Mali-Niger border is of national and regional concern. Niger saw renewed international attention in 2017 due to its role in curbing migration.

The Government has taken forth nexus related initiatives such as the "Nigeriens Nourissent le Nigeriens" (Initiative 3N), and the Sahelo-Saharan strategy. However, there is a need to support national authorities in addressing the root causes of conflict and crises through more integrated action, encompassing human rights and humanitarian assistance, under the framework of the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel.

Progress & Gap Overview

Progress +

+ The Government has created a High-Level Committee on the nexus bringing together national authorities, humanitarian agencies and key bilaterals/IFIs.

+ Joint humanitarian-development analysis is being conducted in the Diffa region.

+ The World Bank has allocated $300million to support risk mitigation in Niger, including resources to scale up early warning.

Gaps –

– Despite the establishment of the High-Level Committee, the Government has yet to operationalize it as a coordinating mechanism due to lack of capacity at central and local level.

– The UN and international humanitarian and development plans are not aligned with government planning. The country lacks a single strategy to tackle the multiple crises, further exacerbating the challenges and fragmentation in response.

– Stronger Government leadership needed to convene key stakeholders and align collective outcomes.

	Not done	In progress	Done
Has joint analysis been conducted?		↻	
Have collective outcomes been articulated?		↻	
Have the collective outcomes been operationalized?	!		
Have resources been harmonized around collective outcomes?	!		

Niger Collective Outcomes

Niger suggested priority areas in which measurable and specific collective outcomes will be articulated:

1. Achieving food security through better natural resource management

2. Ensuring a durable solutions approach to displacement

3. Addressing the consequences of the demographic pressures

4. Acceleration of governance and provision of basic services

Summary of Review Findings and Recommendations

1. Leadership and Capacity

There is wide recognition within the Government of Niger about the need to better address the root of the crises through a more integrated approach. The UN Integrated Strategy in the Sahel (UNISS) and its support plan are fully aligned with the Plan d'Investissement Prioritaire. Pledges, including from the EU led Sahel Alliance, were made at the G5 Sahel Donor Conference in 2019, but national authorities have expressed concern about the delay in disbursement of funds. The lack of capacity within the government is impeding progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

2. Information and Analysis

Solid analysis has been developed, such as in Diffa for the September 2018 Lake Chad Basin conference and the R-CAP analysis and risks and vulnerability analysis done in Liptako-Gourma. However, despite the fact that the HRP, UNDAF and Government plans were recently launched, there is no joint platform to coordinate these and no country-wide analysis that is being used to program across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

3. Articulation of Collective Outcomes:

While priority areas for collective outcomes have been identified, no measurable, specific collective outcomes have been articulated. A comprehensive roadmap for operationalizing the nexus was developed in 2018 but has not been put into action due to competing priorities (including the focus on Diffa), as well as waning interest from the Government.

4. Operationalizing collective outcomes – planning and programming

The next opportunity to align the different plans towards collective outcomes is in mid-2020 (midpoint of the UNDAF, HRP and the government plans). It will also be an opportunity to align with broader regional initiatives related to food security, resilience and stabilization (including the African Union Lake Chad Basin Regional Stabilization Strategy.

5. Harmonizing Resources and Financing

The multitude of crises in Niger are being treated with separate and uncoordinated funding solutions. In Diffa, funding is linked to the Lake Chad Basin Conference and the fight against Boko Haram. The funding pledged at the 2018 Berlin conference brought significant attention to the resilience and development needs that address the root causes. Meanwhile, in the West, the regional approach along the borders with Burkina Faso and Mali is getting attention from the G-5 Sahel initiative and funding. The challenge remains in moving towards a countrywide approach from the central level.

6. Accountability and Monitoring

The different crises in Niger all have separate accountability and monitoring mechanisms. Even in Diffa, despite the convergence that happened in the runup to the Lake Chad Basin conference in Berlin, fragmentation has returned. There is scope however, in bolstering the Tripartite Committee to become the central node that provides national ownership and accountability.

Recommendations

Leadership and capacity: Provide concrete support to the local government (Conseil Regional) for Diffa (for the Boko Haram crisis) to bring together humanitarian, development and peace actors, including through the strengthening of local government capacities on information management, mapping, M&E, strategic planning and reporting. If successful, this is to be replicated in Tillabery for the Liptako-Gourma crisis.

▶ **Action:** JSC to identify resources to deploy 2-3 secondments over the course of the next year, to strengthen Government capacity at the regional level in Diffa.

Regional dimensions: Encourage the Government of Niger to align its policy and action to the African Union Lake Chad Basin Regional Stabilization Strategy to ensure that security and stabilization efforts are supporting the restart of the local economy in the region. This would create more opportunities for youth in communities and build social cohesion between the IDPs, refugees and host community.

▶ **Action:** DSG to engage with the AU and the Government of Niger to ensure more active participation in the UNDP Regional Stabilization Strategy as a way to coordinate security efforts to create the conditions to restart the local economy around Diffa.