

To Goz Beida... Ensemble!

**Author: Alpha Bah, RICTO
United Nations World Food Programme
Dakar, Senegal**



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It's 6:30am local time. Time to get ready for the journey to Goz Beida. Took a quick shower in WFP's lovely guest house in Abeche. Packed an overnight bag and put the rest of my stuff in my suitcase that I will be leaving behind in Abeche. After all, I'm only planning to spend one night in Goz Beida - fly in today (50 minutes flight) and out again to Abeche tomorrow. That was supposed to give me sufficient time to visit WFP, UNICEF, UNHCR and MINURCAT offices in Goz Beida... well, so I thought!

Took a quick cup of hot cocoa and hopped into the waiting vehicle. It was 07:20. The trip from the guest house to the airport and the check-in at the airport was very quick. Nothing like the security hassle that one has to go through with air travel. After all, it's an internal flight.

The UNHAS flight will depart from Abeche to Goz Beida at 08:00am local time. One of the pilots for today's flight is a gentleman I met two days earlier at the WFP guest house in Abeche. After exchanging some few pleasantries, he told me that he'll likely be one of our pilots for my flight to Goz Beida. Great!

"Please fasten your seatbelts... seatbelts should remain fastened throughout the flight. There are 3 emergency exits; one at the rear (door) and 2 up front. Please refer to the safety instruction booklet in the seat pocket in front of you" announced our pilot. He then added "By the way, the aircraft on our right will also be flying to Goz Beida. So, if you see another bird in the sky, don't be surprised. We already know about it. Enjoy your flight!".

In deed, it was an enjoyable flight. We took off just after the other aircraft. Few minutes after take-off we spotted our dear friend in the sky. Then the fun begins...

We flew side by side for some time, then one of the birds will ascend and then descend; move to the left so we can get a good view from the left side and then to the right so those sitting on the other side don't feel left out of the action. Awesome! This continued for some time while we took pictures, video clips and the like. You know the feeling you get on the roller-coaster; having fun while also having a fit.

Flight landed in Goz Beida (50 minutes later) as scheduled. There were vehicles lined up at the airfield waiting to pick up humanitarian workers brought in by the UNHAS flights. I got picked up from the airfield by our WFP driver and off to the office to do some real work. The fun is over!

Yep, the fun is over indeed. I just received notification that due to some problems with fuel availability, all flights to and from the field are suspended until further notice. The 50 minutes flight sure means a lot to the humanitarian community out here. So, how do I get back to Abeche?

Cheers,

Alpha