Country: West Africa Regional Bureau (RBD)
Type of project: Special Operation
Title: Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Nigeria
Total cost (US$): US$ 3,574,602
Duration: Six months (1 May to 31 October 2015)

Executive Summary

This Special Operation (SO) is established to ensure humanitarian access to north-east Nigeria through the provision of safe and reliable air transport services as well as to provide capacity for possible evacuation of humanitarian staff when required.

With the escalation of violence due to Boko Haram activities in northeastern Nigeria and neighbouring countries, there is a looming humanitarian crisis as the security situation is worsening and hundreds of thousands of people continue to be displaced. This has necessitated an increase in the humanitarian presence in the country. As UN agencies and other humanitarian organizations scale up their activities for an effective response, there is difficulty to access the crisis-affected areas due to road insecurity and long waiting at checkpoints that are often subject to insurgent attacks.

Consequently, the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator has requested WFP to establish its United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) in Nigeria with flights to various locations in the North-East in order to provide access to project implementation sites and facilitate humanitarian response to the unfolding crisis. The request follows a WFP Aviation preliminary needs assessment mission in July 2014 and another WFP Scoping mission to Nigeria in February 2015, which coordinated with UNDSS, UN agencies and other stakeholders to identify the air transport gap.

With a budgeted cost of US$ 3,574,602, SO 200834 will be managed by the WFP West Africa Regional Bureau from 1 May to 31 October 2015 with one fixed wing aircraft. Under the project, the current UNHAS link between Dakar and Accra will also be extended to Abuja periodically to ensure a complete regional network and connect humanitarian activities in Nigeria to those elsewhere in the sub-region.

Operational routes and fleet review will be determined in consultation with relevant stakeholders and in accordance with prevailing needs of the humanitarian community. The project will be implemented through standard WFP management structures and support systems and regularly reviewed in line with standard procedures in order to minimize risks and ensure operational efficiency.

Project Background

1. Nigeria ranks 152 out of 187 countries in the 2013 United Nations Development
Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index. It is the most populous country in Africa and characterized by significant economic inequalities, ethnic and religious conflict. Since 2009, the rise of extremist violence by the insurgent group dubbed Boko Haram has plunged the northeast of the country into a state of insecurity. In 2014, Nigeria was estimated to be amongst the countries with the most terrorism-related killings in the world. Incessant Boko Haram attacks are putting millions of people at risk and increasing humanitarian needs. In early February 2015, the escalating situation prompted the government to postpone the 2015 general elections from 14th February to 28th March, ostensibly to allow international forces to regain control of areas in the northeast of the country held by Boko Haram. It is estimated that the postponement of the elections will increase tensions around an intense election campaign, which has been conducted in the shadows of insurgents’ brutal assaults on towns and villages in the northeast.

2. With a steady increase in Boko Haram-related terrorist activities and spill over to neighbouring countries such as Chad, Niger and Cameroon, there has been large displacements of the population. The number of internally-displaced persons (IDPs) varies from a government official figure of 980,0001 to an UNHCR estimate of 1 – 1.5 million2. According to the international non-governmental organization (INGO), FEWSNET report on Nigeria, acute food security persists in the north-east as a result of the continuing conflict and, in the absence of well-targeted humanitarian assistance, as many as 3 million people3 will be unable to meet basic food needs by July 2015. In a bid to scale up the humanitarian response, the UN Secretary-General named Mr Parfait Onanga-Anyanga as the Coordinator of the UN Response on the Regional Impact of Boko Haram and the UN Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) opened its country office in Abuja in January 2015.

3. The scale up of humanitarian operations has required the deployment of UN and NGO staff to various parts in the north-east. However, this has been extremely difficult due to the suspension of commercial flights into most cities in the region. Where there is good road network, it is highly risky to use that means due to acts of banditry, some at the numerous checkpoints, which are subject to insurgent attacks. In July 2014, WFP Aviation conducted an assessment to determine the air transport needs in the country. Consultations took place with stakeholders including UNICEF and ICRC. Although the mission identified some gaps, humanitarian presence in the country at the time was relatively low and there was some means to travel by commercial aircraft, albeit remote. By early 2015 however, this had become more difficult and following another WFP Scoping mission in February 2015, which coordinated with UNDSS, UN agencies and some NGOs, it became evident that a safe and reliable air service would be required to facilitate the humanitarian response. Subsequently, on 24 February 2015, the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator formally requested WFP to establish UNHAS operations in Nigeria to support humanitarian activities in the North-East. The request mentioned possible flights from Abuja to destinations, which may include Maiduguri, Damaturu, Yola, Gombe and Bauchi as well as possible staff evacuation necessary for an effective response to the crisis.

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1 http://nema.gov.ng/there-are-981416-idps-in-nigeria/
2 UNHCR, Nigeria Situation, Emergency Response, January – December 2015, p. 6
3 http://www.fews.net/west-africa/nigeria/alert/january-7-2015
Project Justification

4. Given the frequency of insurgent attacks and the related access constraints, there are large information gaps on the situation of affected populations in the northeast. According to OCHA, 90 percent of Nigeria’s estimated 1.5 million IDPs reside in the northeast, with the biggest portion (482,290 people) in Borno state. It is estimated that 153,000 Nigerian refugees have fled to neighbouring Cameroon, Niger and Chad. The presidential elections, which have been postponed to 28 March 2015, are predicted to exacerbate violence and further deteriorate an already tense situation.

5. Due to the urgent need of the population for protection, emergency food, water and sanitation, shelter, and health and nutrition services, UN agencies and institutions such as the European Commission are advocating for an increased humanitarian presence on the ground. According to OCHA, IDPs have been largely served only by national authorities, who have requested assistance in strengthening the humanitarian response capacity. Considering the growing international pressure to increase the humanitarian presence in the country, it is expected that humanitarian organizations will dramatically scale up efforts to respond to the growing crisis in Nigeria.

6. The provision of access is crucial to enable the humanitarian community’s ability to deliver lifesaving services to vulnerable populations. Priority needs are food, water, shelter, protection and health services. Currently, UN agencies such as UNDP, UNHCR and UNICEF and several NGOs including Oxfam and Save the Children are implementing and monitoring projects in Nigeria.

7. With the disruption in commercial flights with some airports closed to commercial traffic, poor road conditions, long distances and restricted access to most locations in the affected northeastern areas, humanitarian operations are severely hampered. Against this backdrop, the urgent deployment of UNHAS is crucial to fill the existing transport gap.

Project Objectives

8. The objectives of this Special Operation are:

- To provide a safe, effective and efficient access to beneficiaries and project implementation sites for NGOs, UN agencies, donor organizations and diplomatic missions in Nigeria;

- To transport life-saving cargo including medical supplies and high-energy foods;

- To perform adequate capacity for evacuations of humanitarian staff.

The objectives above are linked to WFP’s Strategic Results Framework and are examples of Strategic Objective 1: Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies.

Project Implementation

9. This Special Operation caters for a 19-seat medium-size fixed wing aircraft based in Abuja to link Maiduguri and other locations in the North-East as the core of the operation. Additionally, provision is made for weekly connections between Accra and Abuja with the medium range jet aircraft based in Dakar, which operates under the

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4 ACAPS, Global Emergency Overview, Snapshot 18-24 February 2015, p. 15
WFP Logistics Common Services SO for the West African sub-region. All flights between Dakar and Accra are covered under the aforementioned SO and have no cost implications to the Nigeria SO 200834 while costs for the link between Accra and Abuja are catered for by this SO. The air service will be essential to ensure a reliable link in-country between Abuja and destinations in northeastern Nigeria and elsewhere in the neighbouring countries as may be required. It will also provide a linkage to existing humanitarian operations in the sub-region from Accra to Dakar.

10. Administrative guidance of the operation will be given from the WFP Regional Bureau in Dakar to strategically link it with other UNHAS SOs in the West African sub-region. The Chief Air Transport Officer (CATO) will be based in Abuja. Administrative support will be coordinated by humanitarian partner agencies present in Nigeria and with offices in the capital.

11. This air service is expected to support a wide range of organizations including NGOs, UN agencies, and donor institutions to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of humanitarian activities in Nigeria, particularly in Borno State where 18 humanitarian organizations are currently present. In view of the unpredictable nature of the humanitarian situation and the increasing dimension of security threats posed by Boko Haram, the project is designed to be flexible and adapt to envisaged changing requirements of the humanitarian community. This includes expansion of services to other domestic destinations such as Damaturu, Yola, Gombe and Bauchi, and locations in neighbouring countries such as Yaoundé and Garoua in Cameroon, N’джамена in Chad and Diffa and Niamey in Niger.

12. WFP will set up a UNHAS User Group Committee (UGC) composed of UN agencies, NGOs and donor representatives in Abuja, which will be chaired by the Humanitarian Coordinator and supported by a senior WFP representative from the Regional Bureau or Headquarters. The role of the UGC is limited to administrative matters and includes decisions on destinations to be served and matters relating to the quality of services rendered. Furthermore, it will provide feedback to the CATO to help ensure high service quality. Details of the functions of the UGC will be outlined in the UNHAS Standard Administrative and Operating Procedures (SAOP).

13. The air transport needs will be regularly reviewed and adjusted as the situation evolves, and flights will be planned based on needs assessments and after consultations with the humanitarian community through surveys, interviews, and meetings with the UGC.

14. In addition to the CATO, suitable qualified WFP Aviation staff will be deployed to Abuja, Maiduguri and other locations as may be required to manage the Special Operation. This includes Air Transport Officers, Air Movement Officers, Aviation Security Officers, various aviation assistants and management support staff.

15. The project will implement standard WFP management structures and support systems including the following:

- Passenger and cargo bookings will be made through appropriate management structures to ensure the dissemination of flight schedules and manifests to all locations.
- A dedicated communication system to monitor the progress of all flights through VHF/HF radios and the Satellite tracking systems.
- A web-based electronic Flight Management Application (E-FMA) that enables on-line booking requests by various agencies and monitoring of load factors, operational trends and costs.
- Structured flight schedules to ensure flexibility and accommodate special flights.

**Project Management**

16. The WFP West Africa Regional Director (RD) will act as the Funds Manager. With support from the WFP Aviation Business Unit, the Regional Finance Officer will be the Allotment Administrator of this operation.

17. The overall management, administration, and control of the operation are vested in the CATO, who reports directly to the Regional Director and functionally to the Director of Logistics through the Chief Aviation Service in Headquarters, Rome. The CATO will be responsible for all operational matters including scheduling, operators’ compliance, safety management, and risk management. The CATO will provide operational reports to the RD and the Chief Aviation Service. Regular updates will be given to the Humanitarian Coordinator and the UGC as may be directed by the Regional Director.

18. The Aviation Service (OSLA) in Rome will be responsible for contracting of aircraft, quality assurance and normative guidance to the operation. OSLA will also provide operational and administrative support. Office space and other administrative support will be given by OCHA and/or other UN Agencies that may agree to render such services to WFP.

**Project Cost & Benefits**

19. The total project cost for this Special Operation is US$ **3,574,602** as detailed in the budget below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT COST BREAKDOWN</th>
<th>Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Nigeria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Number</td>
<td>200834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity Development and Augmentation (CD&amp;A):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A – WFP Staff Related Costs (Staff directly involved in Operations)</td>
<td>$ 442,572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - Implementation Inputs (Operational Agreements, Communication, Vehicle leasing and maintenance)</td>
<td>$ 2,447,033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Capacity Development and Augmentation (CD&amp;A):</td>
<td>$ 2,889,604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Support Costs (DSC):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A - WFP Staff Related Costs (Staff involved in Management and Administration)</td>
<td>$ 283,702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B – Recurring expenses and Other WFP Costs</td>
<td>$ 67,780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C – Capital Equipment Costs</td>
<td>$ 18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D – Local Security Costs</td>
<td>$ 30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E – Travel and Transportation Costs</td>
<td>$ 51,663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total WFP Direct Support Costs:</td>
<td>$ 451,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total WFP Direct Project Costs:</td>
<td>$ 3,340,749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Support Costs (ISC - 7 percent):</td>
<td>$ 233,852</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
20. The project will be predominantly reliant on donor contributions. Other funding modalities such as partial cost recovery may be introduced if the UGC so determines.

21. The benefits envisaged under the UNHAS operation in Nigeria are as follows:

- Provision of predictable access to priority destinations in order to enable humanitarian staff and donor organizations to implement and monitor their projects;
- Operational efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation and monitoring of humanitarian operations;
- A common service consistent with the call by the Secretary-General “for greater unity of purpose and coherence at country level and that each United Nations entity should benefit from another’s presence through establishing corresponding consultative and collaborative arrangements”;
- Enhanced air safety through a standardized, single contracting and safety surveillance system;
- A client-oriented common service that responds to user’s needs;
- A cost-effective service that can take advantage of economies-of-scale through continuous monitoring and a results-based management concept; and
- An essential tool used to provide medical and security evacuation services to the humanitarian community in Nigeria.

Efforts will be made to contain costs and ensure value-for-money throughout the project cycle.

Monitoring & Evaluation

22. Key Performance Indicators will be measured and reported at the end of the project and will include the following:

- Number of Needs Assessments carried out (target: 4);
- Number of passengers transported monthly against planned;5
  - Passenger segments (target: 350);
  - Passengers transported (target: 250);
- Percentage of passenger bookings served (target: 95%);6
- Tonnage of light cargo transported monthly against planned (target: 1 mt);
- Response to medical and security evacuations duly requested (target: 100%);
- Number of agencies using the service (target: 15);
- Locations served (target: 6).

As the situation evolves, the implementation plan will be revised, according to the needs of the humanitarian community.

Risk Assessment and Contingency Planning

5 The difference between ‘passenger segments’ and ‘passengers transported’ arises from the fact that one and the same passenger might be routed through multiple segments to get to the final destination. Hence, ‘passenger segments’ reflects the total number of passengers transported, including transits.

6 This does not include unserved bookings due to flight cancellations resulting from bad weather or insecurity.
23. A number of risks could impact the implementation of the Special Operation. The main risks identified are presented through the three risk areas (contextual, programmatic and institutional). The subsequent narrative explains the risks and outlines mitigation measures to be taken.

24. **Contextual Risks.** The extremely challenging security situation is the main risk facing the implementation of this Special Operation. UNHAS will dedicate an Aviation Security Officer to the operation, who will work in close coordination with UNDSS to ensure timely communication of the security situation at destinations and will plan operations accordingly. Operational hazard identification will be constantly implemented through the established WFP Aviation structure and the relevant risk analysis and mitigation actions will be implemented as required to keep an acceptable level of risk.

25. **Programmatic Risks.** Humanitarian agencies may scale up their assistance in the country and increase in their staff and geographical scope. UNHAS remains flexible to adapt the operation in accordance with the needs of the humanitarian community.

26. **Institutional Risks.** The success of the Special Operation is conditional on adequate resources being available to WFP throughout the implementation period. Resource mobilization strategies will include steps to be taken to address any funding shortfall. Fundraising activities will be conducted jointly by UNHAS, the WFP Regional Bureau and Headquarters in order to ensure uninterrupted services for the humanitarian community.

**Exit Strategy**

27. The Special Operation will be implemented for an initial duration of six months. However, WFP in conjunction with the humanitarian community will continuously reassess the needs for air services and determine whether this Special Operation should be extended or an exit strategy developed.

**RECOMMENDATION**

This Special Operation covering the period from 1 May to 31 October 2015 at a total cost to WFP of **US$ 3,574,602** is recommended for approval by the Executive Director with the budget provided.

**APPROVAL**

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Ertharin Cousin
Executive Director
Annex A

Map of planned UNHAS Nigeria routes as of March 2015