Maiduguri, 6 October 2018 – United Nations Development Programme Administrator Achim Steiner and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock today called on national and international partners to reinforce joint efforts to address the dire humanitarian needs in the conflict-affected northeastern Nigerian states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe, while at the same time speed up the recovery of livelihoods.

During a two-day joint official visit to Nigeria, the senior UN officials met with Minister of Finance Zeinab Ahmad, government ministers and high-level officials. On 6 October, they visited projects in Bama town and Ngwom community in Borno, the state most affected by the ten-year conflict, where humanitarian and development workers are providing life-saving assistance and implementing development programmes. The two officials heard first-hand testimonies from people affected by the Lake Chad Basin crisis who are trying to rebuild their lives.

“We are committed to Nigeria and to the people of Nigeria,” said Mr. Lowcock. “We are here to support the Government’s leadership towards solutions in the north-east. Humanitarian aid can only be a temporary solution. I am pleased to be here with the UNDP Administrator to help join up humanitarian and development efforts to save lives, help stabilize the situation, rebuild lives and communities for the future. We must do everything we can to prevent this crisis from continuing for years.”

“We have a unique opportunity to make a real difference to communities across the north-east of Nigeria,” said Mr. Steiner. “Helping people affected by the crisis requires us to work together – humanitarian and development organisations alike – to tackle immediate humanitarian needs and the root causes of the crisis.”

The Government of Nigeria has launched recovery initiatives and efforts in north-east Nigeria aimed at rapid stabilization. Early recovery and livelihood activities implemented by UN agencies and international and local NGOs seek to address the underlying causes of the conflict, lay the foundations for sustainable development and prevent aid dependency.

The humanitarian crisis in Nigeria’s north-east has spilled over into the Lake Chad region. It remains one of the most severe in the world today with 7.7 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in the worst-affected states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe alone. Food security and the nutrition situation remains extremely fragile across the north-east, particularly given the high levels of aid dependency, compounded by the lack of access to land or other livelihood opportunities. Up to 3 million people are estimated to suffer from critical food insecurity. Almost a million children aged from 6 months to 5 years are acutely malnourished, with 440,000 facing Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM).

The visit follows an international donor conference held in Berlin in early September during which international donors pledged US$2.5 billion for humanitarian, stabilization and recovery projects in the Lake Chad region.

For further information and interviews, please contact:
Samantha Newport (OCHA Nigeria): +234 906 22 77 205, newports@un.org
Jens Laerke (OCHA Geneva): +41 79 472 9760, laerke@un.org
Lucky Musonda (UNDP Nigeria) +234 812 949 2749, lucky.musonda@one.un.org
Christina LoNigro (UNDP New York) +1 212 906 5301, christina.lonigro@undp.org