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**UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE
OFFICE OF TRANSITION INITIATIVES**

Country: Republic of Chad
Program: OTI/Chad
Funding: \$6,500,000 in Transition Initiatives (TI) Funds
Fiscal Year: 2017
Program Areas: PS.1 Counterterrorism
PS.6 Conflict Mitigation and Reconciliation
PO.1 Program Design and Learning
PO.2 Administration and Oversight

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is submitting this report pursuant to the requirements set forth in the Transition Initiatives (TI) account heading of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, Division J). The TI provision directs USAID to “submit a report to the Committees on Appropriations at least five (5) days prior to beginning a new program of assistance” using TI funds.

Accordingly, USAID is submitting this report in anticipation that the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID/OTI) will begin a new assistance program in the Republic of Chad with TI Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 funds. The program will initially target the Lake Chad region in the western part of the country and will seek to bolster local efforts to strengthen community resilience against violent extremist organizations (VEOs), especially the Islamic State in West Africa/Boko Haram (ISWA/BH), as part of a regional strategy to undermine the ability of VEOs to recruit and operate effectively.

The initial objectives of the program are the following:

- Reinforce regional security gains;
- Reinforce institutions and processes in the Republic of Chad that build resilience against VEOs, including ISWA/BH; and
- Strengthen regional linkages, coordination and joint efforts in addressing violent extremism and ISWA/BH across USAID/OTI and other U.S. Government (USG) programs in the Lake Chad Basin.

To enhance regional stability and promote U.S. foreign-policy interests, USAID/OTI will use its flexible, innovative, and rapid-response mechanism to target key areas in the Lake Chad area that are most susceptible to marginalization and the influence of VEOs. This program will complement other existing and planned USAID and other USG efforts in Chad itself and the

broader Lake Chad Basin region that are focused on humanitarian assistance, particularly activities to restore livelihoods.

USAID/OTI will obligate an initial amount of \$6,500,000 in FY 2017 TI funding for the program and anticipates the possible addition of future TI funds to the program if progress warrants further investment.

Country and Regional Context and Background:

A stable and secure Chad is a central component in a regional USG strategy to defeat ISWA/BH. Three-fourths of the population in the Lake Chad Basin, which is at the heart of ISWA/BH's operational space, resides inside Chad. Lake Chad also serves as the economic crossroads of the greater Sahel, and historically has served as sanctuary for both criminals and rebel groups. ISWA/BH has been able to tap into existing socioeconomic structures around the lake, has positioned itself in the economic trade chain for funding, targeting and recruiting youth who travel along the border, and uses social networks for intelligence and physical mobility.

The Chadian Government's response to the ISWA/BH threat so far has primarily been military in nature. Security forces have ramped up their presence around Lake Chad, and enacted a state of emergency, which has prompted a large wave of internal displacement. While the Government has regained large areas of the lake, and residents are slowly returning, there is still very limited civilian government engagement and influence on local trade dynamics in a long-neglected area. As the military campaign persists, and as ISWA/BH is pushed out of an area, without the swift re-establishment of services for the civilian population, the government risks creating space for ISWA/BH to return to the vacuum.

USAID sees a number of opportunities for strategic partnerships with USG, Government of Chad (GOC), and multi-donor counterparts that are already operating, or planning to operate, in the region. Numerous humanitarian international non-governmental organizations (INGOS) and United Nations (UN) agencies are planning early-recovery and resiliency programs to assist communities affected by security operations in the Lake Chad region. For example, the UN Development Program (UNDP) is already initiating a de-radicalization program with a livelihoods approach. USAID/West Africa is implementing programs focused on countering ISWA/BH extremist messaging with alternative moderate voices.

A USAID/OTI program would be the primary non-humanitarian mechanism to target frontline communities in the ISWA/BH conflict. Both the U.S. Embassy in N'Djamena and the GOC, as well as the international community, consider this type of program as an urgent next step in the efforts to contain and push back ISWA/BH's presence in the Lake Chad Basin. A USAID/OTI program in Chad will continue to reinforce the increasing partnerships between the USG and governments in the region, and support the United States' vision for how these partnerships can most-effectively counter threats from ISWA/BH and other groups that threaten our shared interests.

Justification for a TI-Supported Program in Chad:

The U.S. strategy for countering ISWA/BH in the Sahel includes the objective of “support[ing] Nigeria and Lake Chad Basin neighbors, including their state and local entities, to implement effective, inclusive, and comprehensive efforts to help provide long-term security for the population, build resilience of communities threatened by ISWA/BH, and address the underlying drivers of violent extremism.” Recent security gains in Chad, complemented with diminished support for ISWA/BH among the local population, provide a window of opportunity to strengthen a regional containment strategy focused on limiting ISWA/BH’s operational capabilities in the Basin.

Given its presence in northeastern Nigeria, southeastern Niger, and northern Cameroon, USAID/OTI can leverage its regional experience and partners to extend the USG regional strategy to counter ISWA/BH to Chad’s Lake region. USAID/OTI will partner with local community organizations and national and sub-national governments to help build their capacity to counter ISWA/BH. The aim of the USAID/OTI program would be to complement the USG’s existing regional efforts to address violent extremism and ISWA/BH through activities to delegitimize and contain ISWA/BH, and reduce its opportunities to benefit from local economic dynamics and recruitment.

Based on over 20 years of transition expertise and relationship building, USAID/OTI is positioned, structured, and staffed to provide a nuanced and flexible response in Chad. By closely coordinating with the rest of the USG on an interagency basis and, as appropriate, with the international community, these activities will be designed to create or preserve political space and set the stage for more-profound, longer-term change.

Proposed Activities:

Recognizing ongoing security operations and the general fluidity of Chad’s challenging, dynamic environment, USAID/OTI will work to most effectively respond to U.S. foreign-policy priorities. The proposed funding will be used for activities aimed initially at improving the legitimacy of the GOC and strengthen civil society in areas in the Lake region affected by violent extremism.

Initial activities designed to support U.S. foreign policy objectives include, but will not be limited to:

- Efforts to reinforce regional security gains in the Lake Chad Basin region. Illustrative activities could include the following:
 - Bolstering GOC engagement with at-risk and isolated communities on Lake Chad’s islands, such as supporting local government-run livelihoods training and distribution of seeds to provide short-term employment;
 - Implementing conflict-mitigation activities in communities that have absorbed large numbers of internally-displaced persons (IDPs) to bring host communities and IDPs together; and
 - Provide strategic communications support to GOC entities that focus messaging on returnees, security, and service-delivery, provide critical and time-sensitive

information to communities and reinforce the role of the GOC and local governments.

- Activities to reinforce institutions and processes that build resilience against VEOs such as ISWA/BH. Illustrative activities could include the following:
 - Implementing community-integration activities in the islands south of Bol directly affected by ISWA/BH attacks;
 - Supporting the training of Lake Chad region community leaders on counter radicalization messaging;
 - Conducting youth-engagement activities to increase their opportunities and motivation to be productive members of their communities;
 - Assisting the Ministry of Education of Chad to update the civic-education curriculum with anti-extremism sections to promote tolerance and peace; and
 - Providing technical assistance to national and/or local government entities to improve their coordination and interaction with communities in the Lake region.

- Projects to strengthen regional linkages, coordination and joint efforts to address violent extremism and ISWA/BH across USAID/OTI and other USG programs in the Lake Chad Basin. Illustrative activities could include the following:
 - Studying and monitoring human mobility flows in the Lake Chad Basin region to understand their implications for regional counter-radicalization programming;
 - Conducting regional conferences on stabilization with the Lake Chad Basin Commission; and
 - Fostering donor coordination on strategic planning and programming in the Lake Chad Basin.