COMMISSION DU BASSIN DU LAC TCHAD
LAKE CHAD BASIN COMMISSION
LIBYE
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NIGERIA
RCA
CAMEROUN

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR THE LAKE CHAD BASIN WATER CHARTER



UICN
BRIDGE

Foreword

It is an honor to present this Simplified Practical Guide to the Lake Chad Basin Water Charter, a document thoughtfully developed through the collaboration between the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). This initiative reflects our shared commitment to ensuring sustainable management of the water resources of the Lake Chad Basin with its vital resources that sustain the livelihoods of millions of people across Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Niger, and Nigeria. However, due to various environmental and development challenges, including desert encroachment, rapid population growth, and climate change, the management and preservation of this shared water resource have become more critical than ever.

The Lake Chad Basin Water Charter is a cornerstone of regional cooperation, developed to safeguard the equitable and sustainable use of our shared water resources, and promote regional integration and safeguard peace. However, for its full potential to be realized, it is essential that all stakeholders, particularly those at the local level, fully understand and embrace its principles. Local administrators, as well as resource users such as fishermen, pastoralists, and farmers, are the lifeblood of this Basin. They interact most directly with the water and its surrounding ecosystems, and it is their active involvement that will ensure success in implementing the Charter.

This Simplified Practical Guide, a vital tool for all stakeholders, seeks to promote understanding and ownership of the Charter at the local level. It is designed to present the core principles of the Water Charter in clear, simple and accessible language that resonates with local communities and facilitates a deeper understanding of their role in its implementation. By presenting the key principles of the Lake Chad Basin Water Charter in a straightforward, and simplified format, it permits local communities to better understand the importance of the Charter and their roles in its implementation. The guide seeks to make the Charter's provisions comprehensible and actionable, ensuring that local resource users are not

only informed but also equipped to participate in its implementation.

The collaboration between the LCBC and IUCN is a testament to our joint vision of fostering sustainable, inclusive water governance and leaving no one behind. Through this guide, we hope to promote greater ownership of the Charter among local stakeholders, encourage collaborative management practices, and contributing to the long-term preservation of the Lake Chad Basin's vital resources.

I invite all stakeholders—particularly local administrators and resource users—to read and engage with this guide, as it will play a critical role in shaping the future of water resource management in the Lake Chad Basin.

Let us all work together to build a sustainable future for the Lake Chad Basin—one that fosters peace, prosperity, and resilience for the people and sustains the functions of the ecosystems.

Sincerely,
Amb. Mamman NUHU
Executive Secretary
Lake Chad Basin Commission



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INTRODUCTION

Since 30 April 2012, the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) has had a major conventional framework: **the Lake Chad Basin Water Charter.** It is the main reference document for the sustainable, equitable and coordinated use of the resources of the Lake Chad Basin. It complements the political, legal and operational instruments of the LCBC, established on 22 May 1964, to ensure the management of this strategic waterway at the crossroads of Central and West Africa.

The Water Charter was designed as a result of a diagnosis of the major cross-border and regional environmental problems facing the Lake Chad Basin, which is shrinking considerably; the natural resources of Lake Chad are becoming scarcer, even though they form the essential basis for the survival of the people living there. Threats to all elements of the Lake's ecosystem are a cause for concern. They are caused by not only climate variations, but also by human activity.

The challenge of the Water Charter and its implementing legislation, known as appendices, is to contribute to improving the living conditions of local populations, in particular by fighting against the depletion of the surface area and resources of Lake Chad. The Charter is based on about thirty international instruments (conventions, treaties, charters, declarations, press releases, decisions, visions, resolutions) that are binding on the «States Parties» that share Lake Chad as their common heritage.

This Guide is designed for all those involved in the management of Lake Chad. It is a simplified, clear and practical summary of the main information contained in the Water Charter and its appendices.

For a long time, Lake Chad was a centre of development, trade and cultural exchange between people living in the north of the Sahara and those living in the south. With a surface area of 2,355,000 km² and a catchment area of almost 967,000 km, this transboundary lake is characterised by the variability of its water surface area. It is the fourth largest lake in Africa and the sixth largest in the world.

30 April 2012: : Lake Chad Basin Water Charter is adopted.

22 May 1964: The Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) is created.

[1]See document 'What challenges do we face together in managing water and ecosystems?



The Lake Chad Basin (Source: Appendix 10 of the Lake Chad Basin Water Charter on emergency and crisis situations).

Code for icons

- Key point to remember
- Who is concerned
- How does it work ?
- Further information
- Glossary

I THE WATER CHARTER:
A Reference Tool for The Protection of Lake Chad

The Lake Chad Basin Water Charter specifies and complements the provisions of the Convention and the Statute of the Lake Chad Basin Commission with a view to facilitating the implementation of the Vision 2025 and the Strategic Action Programme for the Lake Chad Basin.

Its aim is to help the various stakeholders to manage Lake Chad in such a way as to promote the well-being of the populations and environmental sustainability in the Member States of its basin.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CHARTER

1 Equitable and reasonable use of water resources

- through quantitative management,
- by preserving water quality and ecosystems.

2 Improving the socio-economic conditions of the countries of the basin

- through a sustainable economy linked to water resources management,
- by securing food supplies,
- through the prevention of water-related diseases.

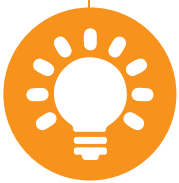
3 Inter-state cooperation and conflict prevention

- through the systematic exchange of information,
- by the obligation not to cause significant damage to neighbouring states,
- through the use of dispute settlement measures.

4 Prevention and handling of emergency situations

- by establishing an environmental, water, fisheries and navigation enforcement of rights and regulations,
- by establishing special measures to prevent and manage severely low waters and drought.

Key points to remember



The Water Charter applies to all public, private, ongoing and planned measures and activities in the Basin, undertaken for :

- better knowledge about surface and underground water resources and ecosystems,
- their use or utilisation to meet socio-economic and environmental needs likely to affect water resources or the environment,
- the protection and preservation of water resources and the environment and the prevention of damage-causing situations.

18 principles have been laid down to ensure the harmonious implementation of the Lake Chad Basin Water Charter. These are binding guidelines and rules of conduct with which the States Parties must comply when applying the Water Charter (see Appendix 1 of this Guide).

Who is concerned ?



- States bordering the Lake Chad Basin,
- Other users at different levels of the Lake within the States Parties (communities, local authorities, etc.),
- Partners (institutional, financial, CSOs, etc.).

How does it work?



State Parties to the Water Chart shall:

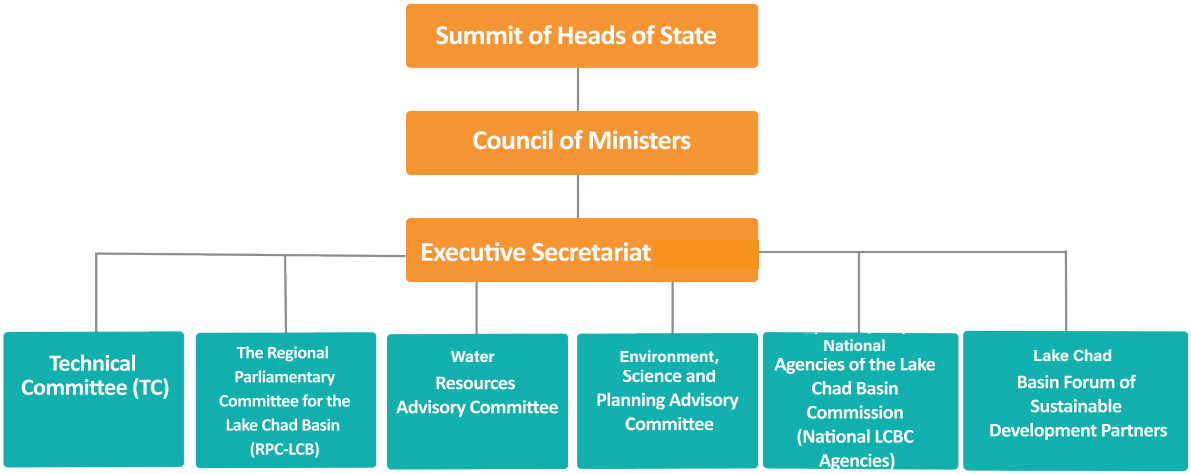
- put in place internal arrangements, including legal, institutional, operational and financial arrangements, to ensure effective enforcement of this Charter,
- submit to the Commission on regular basis national reports on the implementation of the Charter, which shall be reviewed by all the Commission bodies.

The Commission shall determine the outline and format of these reports.

The Executive Secretariat shall :

- assess the implementation of the Water Charter Every two years,
- present the evaluation report to all the Commission bodies for comments,
- If necessary, the Executive Secretary, with the permission of the Council, may carry out an inspection mission in the State Party countries to collect information on the implementation of the Water Charter in that country.

Organisational chart: the main bodies responsible for implementing the Water Charter



Sources

Appendix 7 to the Lake Chad Basin Water Charter on the missions, responsibilities and operating procedures of the bodies of the Lake Chad Basin Commission.

Partnerships

The Lake Chad Basin Commission may authorise the participation of non-member States such as observer States, associate States and States whose participation is partial. In addition, the Commission may grant observer status to intergovernmental organisations and consultative status to non-governmental organisations having an interest in the sustainable development of the Basin. This encourages greater collaboration and a diversity of perspectives in the water resources and environmental management of the Basin.

To effectively implement the rights of the local populations, the Commission shall facilitate the creation of civil society organisations at basin level, with national and local branches and local branches. These organisations may receive the technical and financial support of the Commission.

Settlement of disputes :

- peaceful resolution of any dispute arising from the application or interpretation of the Charter,
- states Parties shall opt for direct negotiations, conducted in good faith, in the event of disagreement,
- if the parties fail to come to an agreement after negotiation, any party thereto shall bring the case to the Lake Chad Basin Commission,
- if this fails, they can resort to the competent regional and sub-regional organisations,
- if all the aforementioned dispute resolution mechanisms fail, the States concerned in the dispute shall bring the case for arbitration or judicial dispute resolution by the International Court of Justice. States shall refrain from any action likely to aggravate the situation during the process,
- the non-contested provisions of the Charter shall remain applicable while the dispute is being resolved.

Further information:



Chapter 17 of the Water Charter, Final Provisions

- **Appendix 7** of the Water Charter, on the attributions, composition, organisation and functioning of the bodies of the Lake Chad Basin Commission.
- **Articles 85 to 91 of the Water Charter.**

II IMPLEMENTING INSTRUMENTS

(appendices) of the Water Charter

> The implementing instruments or appendices to the Water Charter supplement and specify its main provisions. At the end of 2023, there were 11 appendices.

Appendices	Main points of interest	Links with the Water Charter
Appendix 1: Map of the hydrographic Basin of Lake Chad.	General overview of Lake Chad.	**Introduction**
Appendix 2: setting basin-wide limits for abstraction from thee Lake, tributaries and alluvial groundwater.	Conditions and limits for abstraction.	Established in accordance with Article 11 of the Lake Chad Basin Water Charter. **Chapter 2.** Quantitative management of surface and Groundwater resources.
Appendix 3: Environmental flow at key stations in the Basin and abstractions from reaches between key stations.	▪ the catchment area for environmental flows to be maintained during low waters in the basin, ▪ the catchment area for environmental flows to be maintained during high waters, ▪ Procedures for implementing environmental flows .	Established in accordance with Article 12 of the Lake Chad Basin Water Charter. **Chapter 2.** Quantitative management of surface and Groundwater resources.
Appendix 4: establishing procedures for recording abstractions.	▪ Procedures applicable to existing abstractions - authorization or declaration abstractions, ▪ Procedures for implementing abstraction authorisations and declarations.	Established in accordance with Article 16 of the Lake Chad Basin Water Charter. **Chapter 2.** Quantitative management of surface and Groundwater resources.
Appendix 5: data and information exchange procedures within the Lake Chad Basin Commission.	▪ the obligation for the State Parties to collect information and data, ▪ Exchange modalities of data and information on various aspects related to water resources and the environment in the Basin among the State Parties,	Established in accordance with Article 11 of the Lake Chad Basin Water Charter (Harmonised data collection and processing methods). **Chapter 10.** Collection and exchange of data and Information.

	▪ procedures for the functioning of Regional Database (RDB), ▪ procedures for checking and accessing data and information contained in the RDB.	
Appendix n° 6: environmental protection.	Supplements to the provisions on the protection of the environment and natural resources.	Adopted in accordance with chapter 3 and article 97 of the Lake Chad Basin Water Charter. Chapter 1. General provisions and Chapter 17. Final provisions.
Appendix 7: on the attributions, composition, organisation and functioning of the organs of the Lake Chad Basin Commission.	Organisation of the LCBC and roles of each body.	Pursuant to article 97 of the Charter and complements the bodies provided for by the Convention and the statutes of the Lake Chad Basin Commission of 22 May 1964. Chapter 17. Final provisions.
Appendix 8: on prior notification of planned measures.	Conditions, modalities and procedures for implementing prior notification of planned measures, prior declaration of planned measures and information of intent of planned measures in the Lake Chad Basin.	Pursuant to articles 52 to 60 of the Lake Chad Basin Water Charter. Chapter 8. Prior notification of planned measures.
Appendix 9: on the terms and conditions for the coordinated management of hydraulic facilities.	Modalities of all aspects of the coordinated management of hydraulic infrastructure: ▪ Procedures and conditions for coordinated management of hydraulic infrastructures in the Lake Chad basin, ▪ Rules, actions and procedures for the coordinated management of hydraulic infrastructures in the Lake Chad basin,	Chapter 11. Common facilities, facilities of common interest and infrastructure asset management and ownership.
Appendix 10: on emergency and crisis situations.	▪ Rules on the Prevention and management of all emergency situations in order to ensure appropriate protection of the basin through a concerted and participatory management in accordance with the objectives of the Lake Chad Water Charter and in compliance with international standards.	Adopted in accordance with chapter 40 and 41 the Lake Chad Basin Water Charter. Chapter 4. Emergency planning and preparedness to ensure the protection of people, the environment and water resources. **Appendix 9** of the Water Charter: specifies and supplements the provisions of Articles 10 and 12 on emergency and crisis management.

Appendix 11 : on navigation	▪ Joint commitment by the Member States to tackle the obstacles hindering the development of navigation in the basin, ▪ Harmonisation and strengthening of national frameworks for the promotion and management of navigation in inland waters, including those of the Lake Chad basin, ▪ Capitalising on experience.	**Supplements** the rules on the management of navigation set out in article 50 (on freedom of navigation) and article 51 (on the navigability of the Lake and associated watercourses). Chapter 7. Navigation.

Watch points

- The Council of Ministers alone is entitled to revise the Appendices to the Water Charter,
- Appendices adopted or revised by the Council of Ministers shall come into force thirty days after being adopted,
- The Water Charter may be amended upon request of any State Party.

The Water Charter applies to the parts of the Member Countries lying in the hydrographic basin and hydrogeological basin of Lake Chad. **(Article 5. Charter's scope of application).**

Glossary

Lake Chad Basin or Basin (with no other details): Hydrographic basin of the Lake Chad.

Hydrographic Basin of Lake Chad:

area in which all the runoff converges towards Lake Chad being channelled through a network of rivers and lakes flowing into Lake Chad.

Hydrogeological basin of Lake Chad:

areas in the hydrological basin of Lake Chad, where aquifer recharge and use take place on the group of aquifers.

Further information

Chapter 1 of the Water Charter. General provisions
(in particular: Article 5, Article 7, Article 11, / Article 13, Articles 14 to 17)

- **Appendix 2 of the Water Charter :** setting basin-wide limits for abstractions from the Lake, tributaries and alluvial groundwater,
- **Appendix 7 of the Water Charter :** ron the attributions, composition, organisation and functioning of the organs of the Lake Chad Basin Commission.



III 10 POINTS FOR TAMING the Water Charter

The Charter sets out the rules applicable to about ten areas of management in the Lake Chad Basin:

1 The Charter limits the abstraction of water resources from Lake Chad.

2 The Charter sets minimum environmental flows to be respected in wetlands.

3 The Charter commits to preserving the biodiversity of Lake Chad from pollution.

4 The Charter protects and regulates navigation rights on the Lake and its contributors.

5 The Charter establishes a system of prior declaration/authorisation for the development of infrastructure.

6 The Charter provides a framework for the construction and use of common infrastructure.

7 The States Parties commit to anticipating and mitigating effects of crisis situations.

8 The Charter organises preventive monitoring and permanent control of Lake Chad.

9 The Charter recommends the sustained collection and exchange of data necessary for the management of the Lake.

10 The Charter instructs the participation of the populations and the improvement of their socio-economic conditions.

1 The Charter limits the abstraction of water resources from Lake Chad

The Charter establishes the principles and rules for the quantitative management of water resources in the Lake Chad Basin. It limits abstractions from the Lake and the watercourses that contribute to its regime, in order to ensure the security of aquatic biological resources.

The equitable and reasonable use of surface and groundwater is based on compliance with maximum abstraction limits and minimum flows during periods when water is at its lowest level (low flow) and when it is rising sharply (high flow).

Key points

- The Charter commits the States Parties to maintaining the total volume of water consumed annually at a maximum of 6 km3 for both groundwater and surface water (appendices 2). This maximum abstraction volume concerns the lake itself, the contributors to the lake, their alluvial aquifers and the aquifers connected to the lake.
- Any abstraction of water from Lake Chad or the surface or groundwater of its catchment area must be registered with the Lake Chad Basin Commission.
- Water abstraction is subject to:
  - an abstraction authorisation procedure if the annual volume abstracted is greater than or equal to 3 million m3 or if the flow rate through the installation is greater than 100 l/s (360 m3/h),
  - an abstraction declaration procedure if the annual volume abstracted is less than 3 million m3 or if the flow rate through the installation is less than 100 l/s (360 m3/h).
- Existing abstractions must be regularised no later than five years after the entry into force of the Water Charter.

How does it work?

A system of declaration and authorisation of abstractions is put in place, the details of which are set out in articles 14 to 17 of the Charter and in appendix 4.

Who is concerned ?



- The Lake Chad Basin Commission: it shall arbitrate the distribution of this volume among the States Parties using the abstraction authorisations defined in Article 17.
- The States Parties: they issue abstraction authorisations to natural or legal persons, private or public, who request them in accordance with national procedures (Article 17). They also commit to limiting underground abstractions to adapt them to the capacity of the transboundary aquifers or aquifer systems of the Basin, in order to ensure their sustainable exploitation.
- Natural or legal, private or public persons benefiting from abstraction authorisations are subject to an annual tax levied by the national authorities in accordance with their financial rules and procedures (Article 18).

Watch points



- The Charter does not lay down any obligations in terms of the uses to which water abstracted may be put. In the event of conflict between uses, the satisfaction of the essential human needs of the populations of the Lake Chad Basin takes priority over all other uses.
- No provision shall prejudice the right of the States Parties to allocate the waters or part of the waters of the Lake Chad Basin.
- The States Parties are free to sign bilateral or multilateral agreements on water management, provided that they comply with the Water Charter and that the Commission is informed of their content.

Glossary



Aquifers: permeable, porous ground that allows an underground water table to flow and water to be collected.

Further information



Chapter 2 of the Water Charter

Appendix 2 of the Water Charter: setting basin-wide limits for abstractions from the Lake, tributaries and alluvial groundwater.

Appendix 4 : procedures for recording abstractions.

2 The Charter sets minimum environmental flows to be respected in wetlands

To preserve the ecological integrity of ecosystems in the basin (maintaining the good status of wetlands and their surface area), the States Parties are committed to respecting an environmental flow at key points in the basin. Compliance with these minimum flows enables the conservation of aquatic ecosystems and the services they provide, insofar as there is a natural flow (see diagram in appendix 3).

States Parties commit to respect the minimum environmental volumes determined on the basis of the availability of the resource and various factors defined in articles 12, 13 and appendix 3 of the Water Charter.

Key points

The good ecological status of watercourses and the satisfaction of the basic needs of local populations require that a minimum flow be maintained in watercourses during low-water and high-water periods, insofar as there is a natural flow.

Limits on abstractions vary according to the sections of the Lake's tributaries (sources) and climate hazards. To this end, the Water Charter provides for the limitation in some areas (or key points) of the environmental flows to be maintained by regulating the maximum volumes that can be abstracted.

How does it work?

- Flows from key stations are transmitted to the LCBC every week.
- If these flows fall below the environmental values, the Commission informs the Member States of the restrictions on abstraction to be implemented or the possible release of dams.
- These actions aim to increase flows above the environmental thresholds or, in the event of exceptional low water, to minimise the difference between the current flow and the environmental flow.
- Environmental low-water and high-water flows, and the procedures for implementing them, are set out in Appendix 3 to the Water Charter.
- Key points are located at existing hydrometric stations to facilitate flow monitoring.

Who is concerned?



- The Lake Chad Basin Commission: it shall arbitrate the distribution of this volume among the States Parties using the abstraction authorisations defined in Article 17.
- The States Parties: they issue abstraction authorisations to natural or legal persons, private or public, who request them in accordance with national procedures (Article 17). They also commit to limiting underground abstractions to adapt them to the capacity of the transboundary aquifers or aquifer systems of the Basin, in order to ensure their sustainable exploitation.
- Natural or legal, private or public persons benefiting from abstraction authorisations are subject to an annual tax levied by the national authorities in accordance with their financial rules and procedures (Article 18).

Watch Points



- When implementing restrictions on abstraction, the Commission pays particular attention to meeting essential human needs in order to guarantee the right to water.

Glossary

Environmental flows:

refer to the quantities of water needed to support aquatic ecosystems and maintain the overall health of the watercourse (aquatic habitats, water quality and ecological processes in the watercourse). This is an important concept in the management of water resources and the river environment.

For further information :



Article 13 of the Water Charter

Appendix 3 of the Water Charter: Environmental flow at key stations in the Basin and abstractions from reaches between key stations.

3 The Charter commits to preserving the biodiversity of Lake Chad from pollution

Protecting and preserving the quality of water and aquatic ecosystems in the Lake Chad basin is a priority of the Water Charter. The qualitative management of abstractions and uses of abstractions (water and other resources) is based on prohibitions, prior authorisations/declarations, taxes and costs for the various operations.

Key points

States Parties shall cooperate closely among themselves and with the Commission for the prevention, control and reduction of pollution. They shall commit themselves to taking all necessary measures to control and prevent any action likely to modify significantly the characteristics of the Lake or of the watercourses, aquifers and aquatic ecosystems contained in its catchment area, their sanitary and physico-chemical state and their biological characteristics. This generally refers to any measure aimed at protecting the environment from significant or irreversible degradation.

Resource exploitation through agriculture, fishing and livestock farming is subject to sustainable requirements, methods and practices, with the aim of preserving the rights of present and future generations.

Watch Points

- Discharge of radioactive pollutants into the Basin is prohibited. The Commission updates a database of polluting discharges,
- Any polluting discharge into Lake Chad or into the surface or groundwater of its catchment area is subject either to discharge authorisation or to prior declaration, in accordance with pollution standards,
- Natural, legal, private or public persons benefiting from discharge authorisations are subject to an annual tax to contribute to the costs of pollution prevention, control and reduction measures initiated by the public authorities,
- Payment of the pollution tax does not exonerate natural or legal persons, private or public, from their civil liability in the event of damage caused to persons or property, or from their criminal liability in the event of behaviour constituting an offence under their national law.

Who is concerned?



States Parties: they issue discharge authorisations to natural or legal persons, private or public, who request them, in accordance with their national procedures.

Every State Party must inform the Commission, in good time, of polluting emissions from its territory that are likely to have an appreciable adverse effect on water resources and the environment in one or more other State Parties.

The Commission: it sets the amount of the pollution tax and the distribution key between the States Parties.

Glossary

Member States : a State/Country which is a member of the Lake Chad Basin Commission.

Observer States : Non-member States interested in the Commission's objectives, and allowed to attend the meetings of one or several of the Commission bodies, either occasionally or on a permanent basis.

State Party: a contracting party to this Water Charter, i.e. a State which has ratified this Water Charter and for which it has entered into force.

Further information



Chapter 3 and Article 97 of the Water Charter

Articles 23, 24, 25 and 27 of the Water Charter

Appendix 6 of the Water Charter: environmental protection

Appendix 10 of the Water Charter: on emergency and crisis situations

4 The Charter protects and regulates navigation rights on the Lake and its contributors

Lake Chad and its main tributaries are considered to be shared or international water resources. It is therefore necessary for States to work together to manage these transboundary waters.

Key points

- The Water Charter acknowledges and commits the States Parties to respect, ensure and control the freedom of navigation on the Lake and associated watercourses so as not to be impeded in any way.
- Navigation gives rise to the payment of fees for services provided to users.
- The Water Charter also guarantees freedom of sustainable exploitation of resources in the basin.

Watch Points

- Freedom to navigate on the lake and associated watercourses is accompanied by a commitment to respect safety rules and the protection of people, property and the environment during navigation (Article 50).
- States Parties shall take measures to ensure the navigability of the Lake and associated watercourses, making sure to avoid any artificial obstacle that could hinder navigation, such as hydraulic works or submerged cables. (Article 51).

Who is concerned?

The Commission, States Parties, local communities.

Glossary

Tributaires : water courses flowing into Lake (affluent).

Further information

Articles 35 - 51 of the Water Charter

Appendix 11 of the Water Charter, on navigation.



The Charter establishes a system of prior declaration/authorisation for the development of infrastructure.

Due to possible negative effects of new projects on the Lake or the implications of planned actions on other basin States, the Lake Chad Basin Commission defined the type of activities that should be subject to prior notification (Article 52 of the Water Charter).

Appendix 8 to the Water Charter provides a list of planned measures that require prior notification. It also provides information on the procedures and methods for investigating and issuing authorisation for the implementation of planned measures on the Lake.

Planned measures that do not appear in this nomenclature are freely initiated by the States Parties, which make a prior declaration to the Commission. These planned measures are implemented in compliance with the rule of equitable and reasonable use (Article 53 of the Water Charter).

Watch Points

- The Lake Chad Basin Commission is responsible for regularly updating the lists of planned measures subject to prior notification.
- States Parties are free to take measures not subject to prior notification, but those on the mandatory list must be notified to the Commission.
- The States concerned have four months to respond; failure to do so constitutes tacit consent.
- The Commission examines the notification with the help of committees, which may request additional information and encourage consultation.
- The notifying State refrains from implementing the measures prior to the Commission's decision. After six months, the Commission authorises or refuses implementation.
- In extreme cases of emergency, the Member State may act immediately by submitting the planned measure to the Commission for accelerated assessment.

Authorisation to urgently implement the planned measures does not exempt the State Party concerned from complying with its obligations regarding the equitable and reasonable use of water, and from taking all measures so as not to cause significant damage to other States Parties.

Who is concerned?

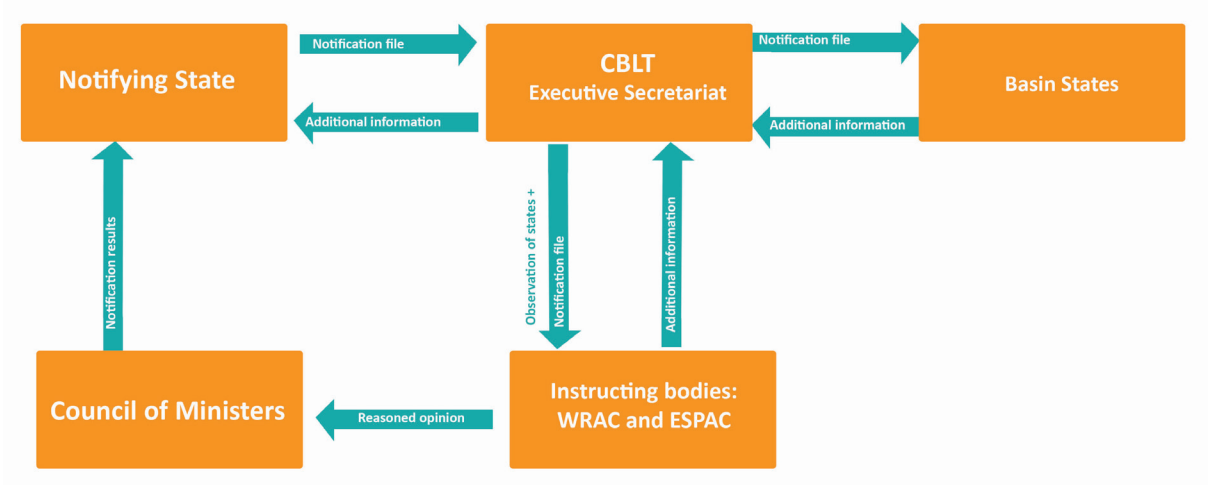
The Commission, the States Parties.

Further information

Water Charter: Chapter 8 (Prior notification of planned measures). Articles 52 to 60.

Appendix 8 of the Water Charter : on prior notification of planned measures.

Organization chart: **Procedure for prior notification of planned measures**



6 The Charter provides a framework for the construction and use of common infrastructure

The Charter recommends collaboration among the States Parties for the construction of common works as part of the sustainable management of the Lake Chad Basin. States may declare existing works as common or of common interest.

Key points

- The Commission shall ensure the strategic planning of common works at basin level, using its hydrological model (Article 68).
- The States Parties shall grant the Commission delegated project contracting authority, at the appropriate time, for national, common works or works of common interest (Article 69).
- The Commission shall manage regional programmes for sustainable development in the Basin, facilitated by the States Parties (Article 70).
- The Commission coordinates the management of transboundary hydraulic infrastructures, covering seasonal and operational planning. Monitoring and maintenance are the responsibility of the project owner (Article 71).).

Glossary

Common facilities : facilities that the Lake Chad Basin Commission member countries have decided, by legal instrument, to be the common, indivisible property of all the State Parties or a group of State Parties.

Facility of common interest :

a facility of interest to two or more Member States of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and for which they have, by mutual agreement, decided on coordinated management.

Further information

Chapter 11 of the Water Charter : Common facilities, facilities of common interest and infrastructure asset management and ownership, Articles 67 to 71.

Appendix 9 of the Water Charter : on the terms and conditions for the coordinated management of hydraulic facilities.

7 The States Parties commit to anticipating and mitigating effects of emergencies and crisis situations

To prevent and manage emergency and/or crisis situations as effectively as possible in order to protect people, the environment and water resources, the Water Charter calls on the States Parties to anticipate situations by providing emergency notification of perceived risks, preparing emergency and adaptation plans to mitigate the effects of the crisis, providing assistance to the States affected, and taking specific measures in the event of floods, severe low-water levels and droughts.

Key points

- The Member States of the Lake Chad Basin shall immediately inform the other States and the Commission of any natural or man-made disaster affecting the Lake, watercourses, aquifers and aquatic ecosystems in their territory, which may have sudden and negative repercussions on other States of the Basin.
- Each State Party commits itself to communicate to the other States of the Basin, through the Commission, an exceptional situation, once such a situation is observed with regard to the criteria mentioned in the first paragraph of this Article. The Commission may declare such a situation itself and shall in all cases inform the other Basin States.
- In the event of crisis situations (floods, low water, etc.), the States Parties commit themselves to coordinate their actions aimed at limiting the effects of the crisis and to take the exceptional measures defined by the Charter or any other appropriate measures.
- The effects of a crisis, as well as the exceptional measures taken by each State party to deal with such a situation, must be communicated to the Commission as soon as possible.

Watch Points



- The Member States commit themselves to adopt preventive and management measures according to their level of risk and their capacity to contribute to the forecasting of these events at the level of the Lake and its watercourses.
- The Member States shall endeavour to responsibly manage hydraulic infrastructures, to provide preventive information to populations and to reduce the harmful consequences of floods.
- The States Parties commit to prepare and implement together with the Commission emergency plans to mitigate the potential damage of crisis situations to the populations, the environment and the water resources of the Basin.
- In the event of an emergency, the Member States shall provide mutual assistance in accordance with the principles of international law.
- They also commit to taking measures to avoid significant damage to other States in the use of the Basin's water resource.
- In the event of significant damage caused despite these precautions, the State responsible commits itself to immediately consult the affected State in order to mitigate the effects as soon as possible.

Every year, the States Parties, on the basis of an analysis of the flood hydrographs of the Chari and Logone rivers, inform the populations bordering the Lake of the maximum level that the coast of the Lake may reach.

Who is concerned?



The Commission, the States Parties, the local populations.

Glossary

Emergency situation : situations that either cause or imminently threaten to cause serious damage to Basin States or other States and which occur brusquely due to natural events such as flooding, torrential water effects, landslide, earthquakes or through human activities such as industrial accidents.

Harmful situation : a situation which may be detrimental to surface or groundwater or to the environment of one or more Basin States and which results from human actions or natural causes, such as floods, water-borne diseases, siltation, erosion, salt water intrusion, drought or desertification, including loss of life and property.

Further information

Chapter 4 of the Water Charter : Emergency planning and preparedness to ensure the protection of people, the environment and water resources.

Appendix 9 of the Water Charter : on the terms and conditions for the coordinated management of hydraulic facilities.

Appendix 10 of the Water Charter: on emergency and crisis situations.



8 The Charter organises preventive monitoring and permanent control of Lake Chad

In the context of protecting and preserving the quality of water and aquatic ecosystems in the Lake Chad basin, the Water Charter sets out obligations aimed at preventing and combating pollution, as well as obligations and measures for conserving biological diversity. It also contains specific provisions on fishing and pastoralism.

The Charter proposes to establish a regional system for regular monitoring of the quantity and quality of water in the Basin and prohibits any action that could degrade the Lake and its ecosystem or cause significant damage.

Key points

The States Parties are obliged to prevent and take action to mitigate the effects of floods, drought, low water levels, silting, erosion, degradation of banks, floods, drought, desertification or deforestation (Article 29), **land degradation** and any other situation likely to cause significant damage.

Watch Points

The States Parties should identify, make inventories of and regularly monitor the biological diversity of the Basin's aquatic ecosystems and take appropriate measures for their conservation, paying particular attention to endangered species and those with the greatest potential for sustainable use (Article 28).

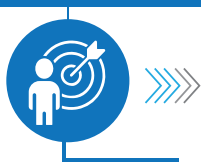
A control is prescribed for any introduction of alien or new invasive aquatic species of fauna and flora likely to have a negative impact on the ecosystems of the Basin (article 30).

The States Parties are committed to take necessary measures for the protection, conservation, sustainable use and rehabilitation of the vegetation cover in the Basin. These measures should include the adoption of management plans that take into account the social and economic needs of the populations concerned, the importance of vegetation cover for soil protection, water resources and its role for animal species.

- Activities carried out by a State Party on its territory that are likely to have negative effects on the environment shall be subject to an environmental and social impact study designed to identify those impacts in order to take measures to prevent or mitigate them (Article 45).
- The States Parties commit to regularly assess the consequences of ongoing activities in the Basin in order to bring them into line with current environmental standards.
- Policies, programmes and plans for the development of water resources and the environment of the Basin shall be subject to a strategic environmental assessment before they are implemented (Article 47).
- Pending harmonisation of environmental assessment legislation by the Commission, environmental assessments shall be governed by the national legislation in force or, in the absence of such legislation, by the guidelines of the competent international organisations (Article 48).

The States Parties and the Commission, in cooperation with the competent international organisations, shall develop and implement programmes and strategies for the prevention and eradication of water-borne diseases in the Basin (Article 49. Water-borne disease control).

Who is concerned?



The Commission, the States Parties and the people who have suffered transboundary damage.

Glossary

Water policy:
a set of rules and institutions to protect water resources by preventing and punishing infringements of water legislation.

Further information



Chapter 3 of the Water Charter :
Protection and preservation of water quality and aquatic ecosystems in the Basin.

Chapter 5 of the Water Charter :
Prohibition to cause significant damage.

Appendix 6 of the Water Charter : on the protection of the environment.


Lake Chad, a protected lake

9 The Charter recommends the sustained collection and exchange of data necessary for the management of the Lake

In the context of water resources management in the Basin, the Commission works with the States to simplify the harmonisation, collection, exchange and use of data at regional level. The States Parties are required to collect data on the water and environment of the Basin and to exchange them regularly through the Commission to improve hydrological, environmental and socio-economic understanding of the Basin.

Key points

- A Regional Database is created and managed by the Lake Chad Basin Observatory, bringing together information provided by the States Parties to meet the needs of the Commission, the Member States and other users.
- The Lake Chad Basin Commission ensures that, through the Observatory, its own regional database is gradually set up, accessible to all users in accordance with arrangements agreed in advance among the States Parties.

Watch Points

- The States Parties are committed to regularly exchanging, through the Commission, the data and information available on the Basin in order to improve hydrological, environmental and socio-economic knowledge (Article 65).
- Appendix 5 of the Charter specifies the procedures for exchanging data and information within the Lake Chad Basin Commission, as well as the data that should be provided.
- The data is sent by the States through their National Focal Structures (NFS).

Data and information vital to national defence and security are not covered by the obligation to exchange information and data.

Type of information	Data to be transmitted	Frequency of transmission
Water resources.	River flow.	Weekly
	Piezometric readings.	Monthly
Water abstraction (domestic, agricultural, pastoral, industrial).	Location, volumes abstracted, authorised flow rate, contracting authority, etc.	Quarterly
Meteorology.	Temperature Evapotranspiration Humidity	Monthly
	Rain	Weekly
Feedback on floods .	Description of notable floods, their Description of notable floods, their impacts and the management of associated crises.	Annual
Quality	Parameters and characteristics indicated in the appendix on quality (including physical, chemical and bacteriological quality, data on sedimentation and solid transport).	Annual
Discharge	Parameters and characteristics indicated in the appendix on quality.	Annual
Irrigated areas	Areas developed, cultivated in dry and rainy seasons, and crop rotation.	Annual

Further information



Chapter 10 of the Water Charter: Collection and exchange of data and information. Articles 50 to 65, article 63 (Harmonisation of collection and processing methods).
Appendix 5 to the Water Charter: Modalities for exchanging data and information within the Lake Chad Basin Commission.

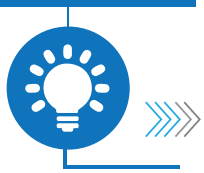
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The Charter instructs the participation of the populations and the improvement of their socio-economic conditions

The States Parties, together with the Commission, shall take the necessary measures to encourage and facilitate the sensitisation of local communities to empower them and increase their awareness for a better participation in the integrated and sustainable management of water resources and other natural resources of the Basin.

They acknowledge the fundamental role played by the national agencies of the Lake Chad Basin Commission in the implementation of activities to promote the sustainable development of the Basin. **(Article 81).**

Key points



- As regards water and sanitation in particular, the Water Charter sets out a dozen rights and commitments of the States Parties towards the populations of the Lake Chad Basin.
- The States Parties thus commit to promote participatory and integrated management that enables the populations to be involved in the management of the Lake and to benefit sustainably from its resources.

Watch Points



- The right of populations to water and sanitation is recognised as a fundamental right, requiring appropriate measures for its implementation **(Article 72)**.
- The Commission establishes a Participation Plan to ensure public information and participation. Access to information on water resources and the environment, as well as administrative and judicial remedies, shall be ensured **(Article 73)**.
- he needs of women, young people and vulnerable groups are given particular attention in the management of water resources and the environment **(Article 74)**.
- Traditional authorities are recognised and taken into account in environmental protection, as well as local know-how and traditional water-sharing systems **(Article 75)**.
- Local populations participate equitably in the benefits of the exploitation of genetic resources in accordance with international conventions.

- The Charter encourages the creation of basin-wide civil society organisations, supporting those that contribute to sustainable management with technical and financial resources **(Article 78)**.
- Capacity building is encouraged, with particular attention paid to women, young people, civil and Community-based organisations **(Article 79)**.
- Scientific research in the Basin must be supported, with emphasis on its crucial role in the knowledge and protection of water resources, while encouraging collaboration between national and international research institutions. This research shall include traditional knowledge **(Article 80)**.
- The Charter commits the States Parties to promote environmental education and awareness-raising among local communities, in order to increase their empowerment and participation in the integrated and sustainable management of the Basin's water and other natural resources **(Article 81)**.

Civil society organisations have the right to appeal to the courts to defend collective interests in matters related to the environment and water resources of Lake Chad.

Glossary

Local community : the human population in a given geographic area enjoying its genetic resources, innovations, practices, knowledge and technologies, partially or totally governed by its own customs, traditions or law.

Consultation du public : activities consisting of asking the opinion of the local populations and/or social groups affected by a project, among others, to help determine the impacts a project is likely to cause, as well as the acceptability of the solutions that can be offered to compensate for them, or the most appropriate mitigation measures.

Community-based organisation : a legal entity under private law whose purpose is community development, such as village groups, cooperatives, unions or federation.

Civil society organisation: a private law entity conducting non-profit activities in one or more State Party countries.

Further information

Chapter 12 of the Water Charter: Rights of people living in the basin.
Chapter 13 of the Water Charter: Promotion activities.



CONCLUSION

The Water Charter is the key instrument for promoting sustainable development in the Lake Chad Basin. The implementation of its guidelines by the various stakeholders is crucial to meet the challenge of improving the quality of life of local populations, especially as it prevents the Lake's surface area from shrinking and ensures the sustainability of the availability of important resources for the people living along the shores of the Lake Basin.

Bibliographical references

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APPENDICES

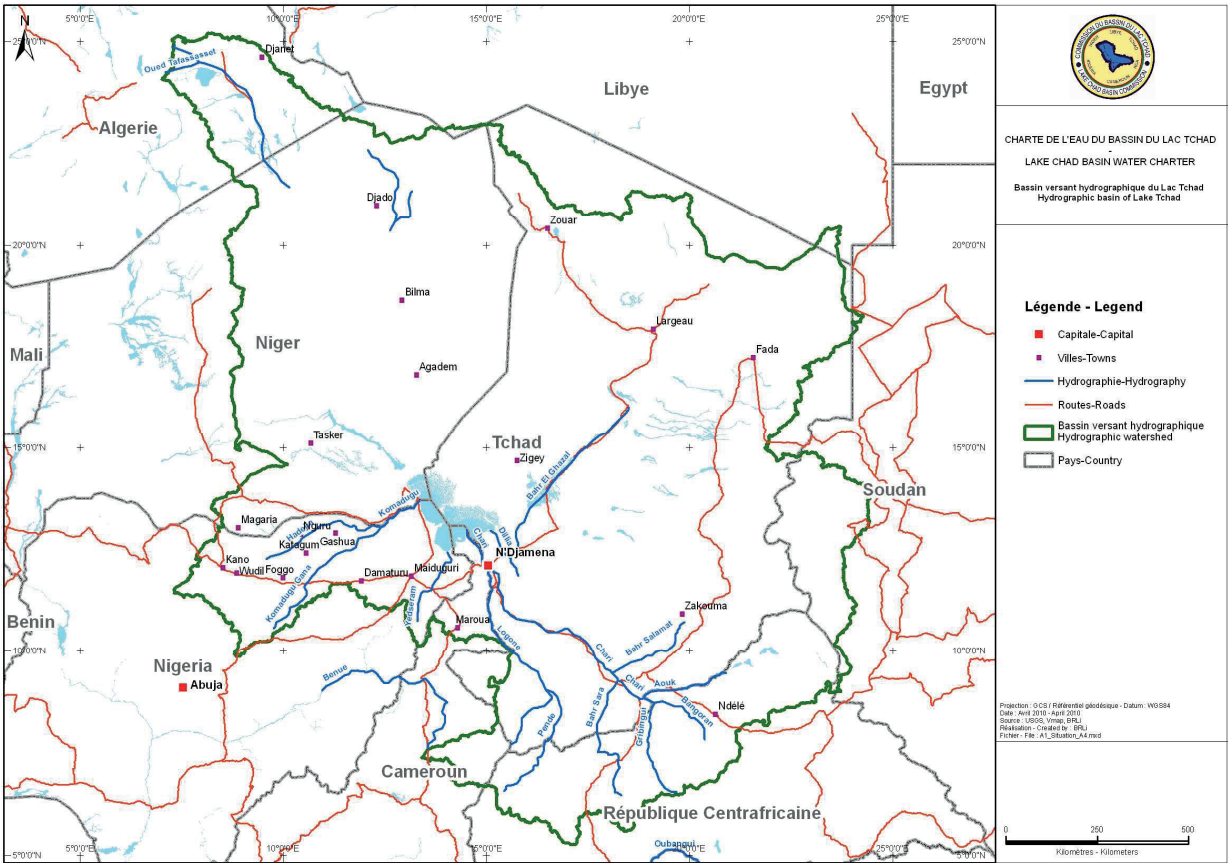
II - The 18 main principles for implementing the Water Charter

1. Sustainable development.	Reconcile the requirements of economic development, environmental protection and social development, without compromising the needs of future generations.
2. Preventing negative effects on the environment.	Give priority to the prevention and reduction of harmful impacts on the environment and health when planning and implementing basin management projects.
3. The «user pays» principle for non-domestic water use.	Non-domestic use of water gives rise to the payment of a fee intended to contribute to the financing of water-related services.
4. The polluter pays principle for pollution-related costs.	The costs of pollution prevention, control and mitigation measures shall be borne in full or in part by the polluter.
5. Equitable sharing of costs and benefits among States Parties .	All the States Parties should contribute to and benefit equitably from transboundary initiatives undertaken in the Basin.
6. The principle of subsidiarity for relevant interventions.	States Parties and the Commission should intervene at the level deemed most relevant.
7. The right of the public to information and participation.	The public has a right of access to information held by public authorities so that it can participate effectively in the national decision-making process.
8. The precautionary principle in the face of scientific uncertainty.	The absence of scientific certainty should not be used as a pretext for postponing the adoption of measures to ensure the quantitative and qualitative protection of the Basin's water resources and environment.

9. Solidarity to preserve the Basin.	Cooperation among neighbouring States for the sustainable management of the Basin should be based on the notion that Lake Chad, as well as the watercourses, aquifers and aquatic ecosystems of its catchment area, represent a common heritage. The States are committed to preserve it in the interest of all, with the aim of promoting peace and development in the region. This also aims to ensure the political and social cohesion of the Basin by providing support for the most disadvantaged populations and areas.
10. Cooperation among States and organisations.	Develop relations among States, basin organisations and regional organisations to ensure integrated, concerted and peaceful management of the basin's water resources and environment, and to generate positive gains in basin management.
11. Partnership among stakeholders.	Seek complementarities and synergies among national institutions or intergovernmental organisations, non-governmental organisations, associations and all actors involved in the field of the environment to ensure greater effectiveness of the actions taken.
12. Equity in the management of shared water resources.	Manage shared water resources taking into account the legitimate needs of all Basin States.
13. Management by watershed sub-basin.	The sub-watershed is the most appropriate geographical unit for implementing initiatives at local level.
14. Taking gender into account.	Interests and contributions of women, youth and vulnerable sections of society are taken into account in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of projects and programmes for water resources management and environmental protection in the Basin.
15. Accountability in implementing obligations.	The States Parties commit themselves to implement in good faith and in accordance with international law, the obligations undertaken through this Water Charter.

16. Good environmental governance.	▪ the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage the affairs of the Basin shall take into account the legitimate concerns of the people at all levels ; ▪ All methods and practices for distributing power and managing public resources and public problems concerning water and the environment in the Basin integrate the populations.
17. Complementarity of regional economies.	Aim for regional integration. Make the most of the complementarities of the Member States' economies, on the basis of current or potential comparative advantages within the Member States of the Commission.
18. Progressive implementation of water resource management and environmental protection measures.	The implementation of measures to manage water resources and protect the environment should take into account the need to make the necessary adjustments gradually.

III - Reference points for minimum flows to be abstracted

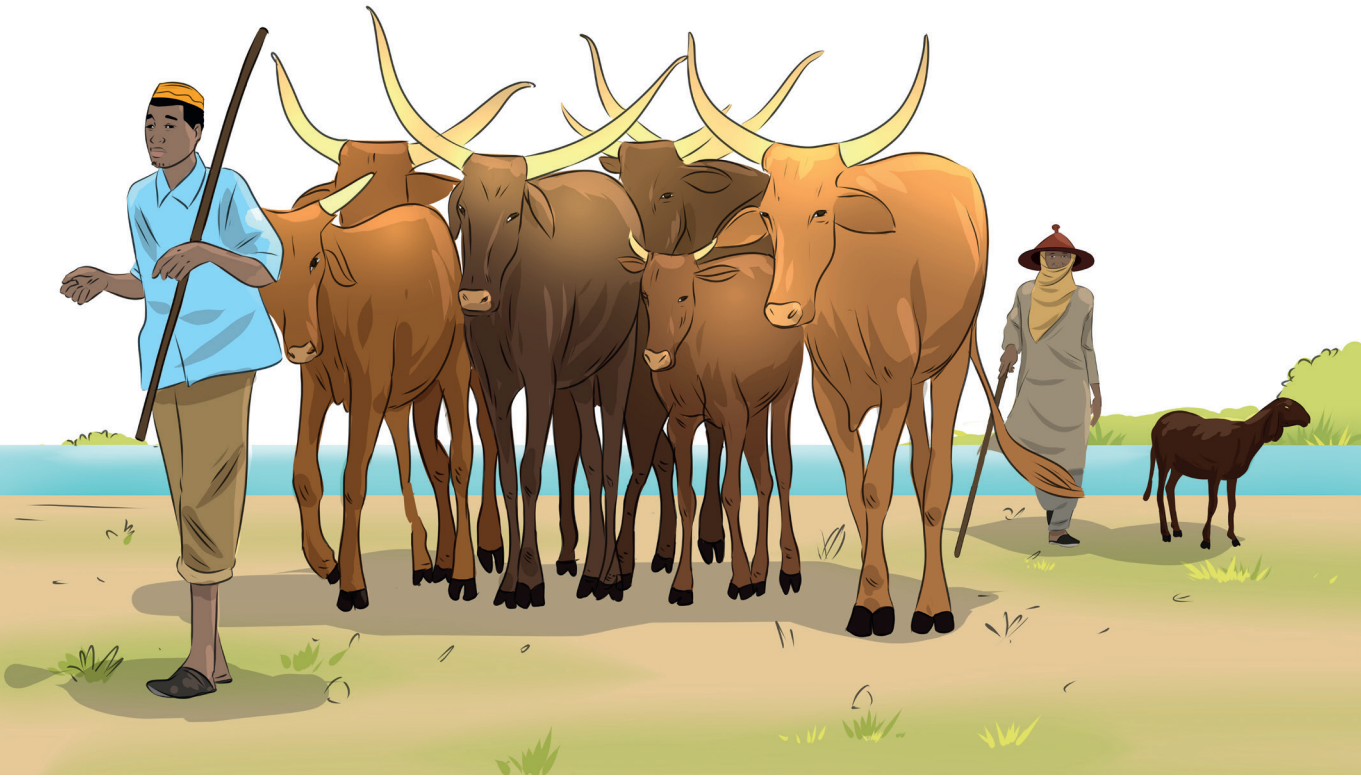


Sources

Appendix 3 of the Water Charter

The right to water of the people living in the Lake Chad basin is guaranteed and protected. Major abstractions require authorisation in order to maintain a minimum flow in the lake.

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The Simplified Practical Guide to the Lake Chad Basin Water Charter has been developed with the support of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) through the Building River Dialogue and Governance (BRIDGE) project.

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