PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES OF RESCUING THE SHRINKING LAKE CHAD THROUGH THE UNITED NATIONS' GREEN CLIMATE FUND

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ABSTRACT

Since the 1960s the Lake Chad has shrunk by about 90% of its original size primarily because of climate change. Some studies have estimated that if the current trend continued, the Lake could disappear in the next few decades. From the 1980s, attempts have been made by the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) to rescue the shrinking Lake. The most viable plan is the idea of an inter-basin water transfer (IBWT), developed by the Italian Engineering Company Bonfica which involves diverting about 4% of the waters of the tributaries of River Bongi in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) that discharge into the Atlantic Ocean through a series of canals and dams to River Chari (that feeds the Lake) in the Central African Republic (CAR). The current estimate for the project stands at fourteen billion U.S dollars ($14b). Raising the fund by the LCBC to execute the project has become the major obstacle to the realization of the project. Although there is a new initiative by the Italian government and the Chinese construction company PowerChina in partnership with Bonfica to resurrect the idea, the paper argues that the LCBC has failed to access and utilize the adaptation facilities under the United Nations adaptation funds. Drawing from the argument of the justice for international adaptation framework, the paper assesses the vulnerabilities and opportunities of the Lake Chad countries and conclude that, to bring the IBWT to fruition, the LCBC and the riparian states of the Lake Chad must explore and access all available sources of fund, especially the Green Climate Fund.

Key words: Vulnerability, climate, adaptation, and Mitigation

Introduction

Several factors are responsible for the shrinking of the Lake Chad. However, climate change is considered to be the most important factor. According to the document of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) "Regional Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change" (RSACC), since the beginning of the 20th Century, the climate of the Lake Chad Basin has been characterized by strong inter-annual variation. It involves two phases: one a generally humid phase from 1901 to 1960 punctuated by dry years during the 1910, 1920, and 1940 decades and; two a dry phase since 1960, interrupted from the 1990s by a recovery in rainfall with heights not comparable to the situation at the beginning of the Century (RSACC). In the same vein, projections made about the impacts of climate change in the Sahel region and the Lake Chad Basin (based on existing models of climate scenarios) indicate that the region, as a whole, is likely going to experience the same trend of instability up to the year 2040 (RSACC).

The Lake Chad basin is one of the largest freshwater lakes in the world. It is the fourth largest in Africa after Victoria, Tanganyika, and Nyssa. The Lake is situated at an altitude of 280 meters above sea level, and it is the heart of the human, animal, and plant life in the region; it is home to over 120 fish species, 372 bird species, a cattle breed called Kuri, unique in the Lake Chad basin (LCBC). Nearly all the riparian countries of the Lake have communities whose economic wellbeing is linked to the Lake. Between 30 and 40 million people rely directly and indirectly on the Lake for their livelihoods through farming, fishing, and animal husbandry (Conference Report on Lake Chad: 2008).

Although the Lake Chad Basin covers an area of about 2,397,423 km2 stretching into nine contiguous countries (Algeria, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Nigeria, Niger, and Libya), the actual Lake straddles the borders of only four riparian countries (Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria, and Niger).Table 1 below shows the distribution of the Lake Chad Basin by basin area within member countries.

Table 1: Distribution of the Lake Chad Basinby basin areawithin member countries

Country	Basin surface area (km^2)	Portion of basin (%)
Chad	1 109 201	46.3
Niger	671 868	28.0
CAR	217 340	9.1
Nigeria	180 364	7.5
Algeria	89 694	3.7
Sudan	81 360	3.4
Cameroon	46 049	1.9
Libya	1 548	0.1
TOTAL	**2 397 423**	**100**

Source: LCBC 2007

The Lake Chad Basin Commission is the body that oversees and coordinates the activities of the Lake Chad. It was established in 1964 by the countries with contagious borders with the Lake, namely: Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria, and Niger. Other basin countries that subsequently joined the LCBC are the Central African Republic in 1994, Libya in 2008 while Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Republic of Congo have observer status. The key responsibility of the Commission is to coordinate the activities of the basin countries to ensure sustainable and equitable resource management which in-turn promotes peace, security, and economic cooperation among the basin countries.

The Commission has three administrative layer structure. The highest decision-making authority of the Commission is the Summit of the Heads of State that meets every other year to approve important projects and takes other important decisions. The Council of Ministers is the second-highest decision-making body. It is composed of two commissioners from each member country. They meet every year in an ordinary session at the Commission's Headquarters at N'Djamena Chad to regulate the activities of the Commission. The Secretariat is headed by an Executive Secretary who holds office for three years and is eligible for reappointment. The Secretariat is in charge of the day to day running of the affairs of the Commission's mandate. It implements the decisions of the Heads of state and that of the Council of Ministers.

Nigeria is the largest contributor to the funding of the LCBC. It contributes 52% of the total budget of the Commission. Cameroon contributes 26%, Chad 11%, Niger 7%, and the Central African Republic 4% (Charter of the Lake Chad Basin Commission).

Since the 1960s, Lake Chad has receded to about 10% of its original volume. Climate change is said to be the major cause of the shrinking of the water of the Lake. Other factors include diversion of rivers and streams water by riparian countries for dry-season agriculture. Over the years, efforts have been made, especially by the Lake Chad Basin Commission to find a solution to the problem, but it has remained unsolved. One of the most viable solutions to the problem is, the idea of drawing water from River Bongi in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (which discharges into the Atlantic Ocean). Through a series of canals and dams to River Chari (that feeds the Lake) in the Central African Republic (CAR) to the Lake Chad. This idea was developed by the Italian Engineering Company Bonfica. However, because of the inability of LCBC to secure the required funds, the idea has remain on the drawing board. Several suggestions were made on how to acquire the funds needed to execute the project by the LCBC, but none of them has come to fruition. Going through the literature on the idea of replenishing the Lake Chad indicates that there is no robust attempt to interrogate the issue at hand. Namely the urgency to secure the required funds to save the Lake from dying completely.

One of the few articles that discussed the issue of the shrinking is the Lake Chad; "The Hydropolitics of National Security and Regional Recharging Integration in Africa" by Ifabiyi, I. P. The paper discussed the impact of the shrinking Lake Chad has on the national security, especially of the riparian countries of the lake. It highlights the political and economic factors that have contributed to the decline of the lake, as well as the potential solutions that have been proposed to address the problem. However, the paper did not address the all-important issue of sourcing the funds to execute the proposed project to replenish the shrinking lake. This glaring silence from particularly the academic community on the need to interrogate the issue of funding the replenishing project of Lake Chad is an important gap that needs to be filled.

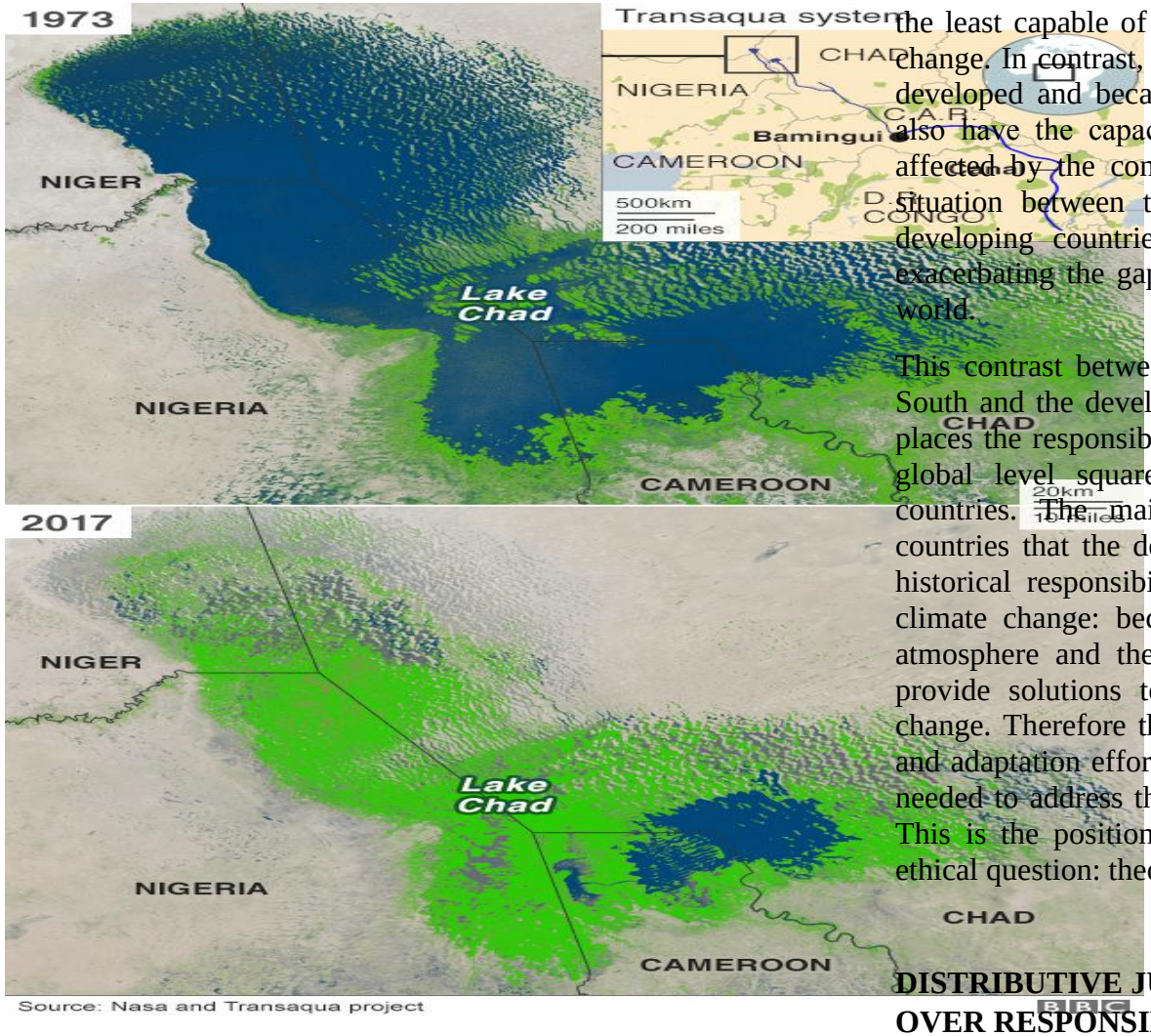
CLIMATE CHANGEAND THEVULNERABILITIES OF THE LAKE CHAD BASIN COUNTRIES

There are two notions of vulnerability, viz. biophysical vulnerability, that is, the degree of physical exposure to the impacts of climate change, and the degree of the capacity to adapt to the impacts. The other notion of vulnerability is social, which is the ability of individuals and groups to effectively deal with the impacts of climate change (Grosso: 18).

According to the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), between 1963 and 2000, the lake has shrunk by 90% of its original size of 25,000 km2, to just about 2000 km2. This drastic reduction in the size of the Lake has generated some interest from international environmental organizations and researchers from around the world who sort to investigate the causes of the massive reduction of the Lake in just four decades. According to Jia *et al.* (2017), two main factors are identified as the main reasons why Lake Chad shrunk to just about 10% of its original size. Climate change and human activity (i.e. diversion and irrigation schemes alone the tributaries that feed the Lake, due to increasing population in the riparian states and also the influx of people from other countries who settle around the Lake to engage in farming).

The major sources of water into the Lake are River Chari and Logone Rivers that contribute 90% of the Lake's waters. The pictures below obtained by the BBC from NASA compare the size of the Lake in 1973 and 2017. Several studies have shown that the Lake is likely to dry up completely in the next two decades if nothing is done to rescue it by addressing the factors that are responsible for the situation in the Lake (Jia et al.: 2017), climate change, and human activity.Yet again, if the Lake Chad is to dry up completely, this will accelerate climate change in the region. Already the Lake Chad region as well as the greater Sahel region is experiencing massive desertification. Since 1970 the Sahara desert has moved southwards by miles, (90 km). On the one hand, global climate change is changing the climatic conditions of the region on the other, the regional climate is negatively affected by the drying of Lake Chad. The combination of these factors indicates that the region is bio-physically very vulnerable.

The socio-economic sectors of West Africa are also heavily susceptible to climate variability and change these have direct implications on food security, poverty, insecurity, etc. in the region. Yet again, sub-Saharan African countries as a whole are the least capable of adapting to the challenges posed by climate change. They are among the poorest countries in the world and have remained so for decades. For example, the 2019 Human Development Index shows that among the 189 countries on the list, all the sub-Saharan countries of the Lake Chad Basin occupy the bottom rungs. Cameroon is on number 150, Nigeria is rank 158, Chad 187, Central African Republic 188, and Niger being the last country on the HDI list, occupies the very last position of number 189 (HDI 2019).



African countries contributed the least to the concentration of greenhouse gases (GHG) that have accumulated in the atmosphere since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution at the end of the 18th Century in Europe and are still the least contributors to the current global emissions (just about 4%). Yet African countries bear disproportionate effects of global warming and climate change. Yet again, African countries are the least capable of dealing with the consequences of climate change. In contrast, the industrialized developed countries that developed and became rich by polluting the atmosphere and also have the capacity to "brave the weather" are the least affected by the consequences of the changing climate. This situation between the rich countries of the North and the developing countries of the South portends the danger of exacerbating the gaps between rich and poor countries of the world.

This contrast between the developing countries of the global South and the developed industrialized countries of the North places the responsibility of dealing with climate change at the global level squarely on the shoulders of the developed countries. The main argument put forward is that those countries that the developed by burning fossil fuels have the historical responsibility to carry the burden of dealing with climate change: because they become rich by polluting the atmosphere and they have the resources and technology to provide solutions to some of the consequences of climate change. Therefore they should lead the way in the mitigation and adaptation efforts by substantially providing the resources needed to address the threats posed by global climate change. This is the position of those who see climate change as an ethical question: theorists of the distributive justice school.

DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE AND THE CONTENTION OVER RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

The theory of distributive justice in international adaptation funding was developed in response to the question of the criteria by which negotiations on how the climate change crises the world is facing can be addressed by all the countries of the world. To evolve these criteria, the central question that had to be answered was the question of whether or not climate change is an ethical question. This question was important because it

was obvious that the developing countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America suffer the impacts of climate change in terms of the extreme climatic events that the changing climate is generating more than the developed industrialized countries. African countries, for example, contributed the least carbon dioxide CO2 (the main greenhouse gas, accounting for 76% of the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere) since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. Yet, it is projected that sub-Saharan African will suffer the most impacts of climate change in all its different manifestations; flood, drought, rising temperature, environmental degradation, etc. Already the continent has been recording a steady rise in the occurrence of these extreme events. Many studies including those published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and other regional-based studies have shown that West Africa's climate has been changing over several decades. For example, a study published by a group of researchers of the Sahel regional center for research in Agriculture, Hydrology, Meteorology (AGRHYMET) shows a substantial increase in extreme climatic events in West Africa over the period between 1960 and 2010 in both rainfall pattern and temperature (Ly et al. 2013).

To determine the cause of action on the unfolding climate change many questions needed to be answered hence a long debate ensued since the beginning of the 1990s on why was the climate changing? In other words, is the current changes observed in the climatic caused by human activity (anthropogenic) or is it just the natural cycle of the climatic system? On the one hand are those scientists who are convinced that the changing climate is caused by the emissions of harmful greenhouse gases (GHG) into the atmosphere which started at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in Europe and on the other are those who believe that the changing climate is not caused by the emissions of gases into the atmosphere.

To have an irrefutable answer to this all-important question, the United Nations through the World Metrological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a network of some of the world's leading scientists and experts to put together mainstream understanding and interpretation of climate scientists about the causes (s) and implications of climate change. Thus far the body has produced five rounds of main reports: the First Assessment Report (FAR)-1990; the Second Assessment Report (SAR) -1995; the Third Assessment Report (TAR) -2001, the Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) -2007 and the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5)-2014 and several other Special Reports updating the current state of knowledge on the science of global warming and climate change. The overwhelming conclusion from all the reports is that climate change is caused by human activity mainly through the burning of fossil fuels. The First IPCC Assessment Report provided the basis on which the United Nations convened an international conference in Rio de Janeiro Brazil in 1992 to create a pathway by which all countries of the world will have a long-term international agreement to address the challenges of climate change. The outcome of which was the first global United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Article 2 of the UNFCCC states the objective of the Convention thus:

> The ultimate objective of this Convention and any related legal instruments that the Conference of the Parties may adopt is to achieve, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference

> with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner. (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change-UNFCCC 1992).

Since the convention in Rio and all through the various Conferences of the Parties to the Convention (COP) that are held every year to assess progress made and also to negotiate new agreements between the developed and the developing countries on mitigation and adaptation policies. The tug of war between the two camps (otherwise known as Annex 1 countries viz. the industrialized countries and Annex II countries viz. the developing countries) has not subsided. Although the developed countries have in principle, accepted the historical responsibility for the current concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, they have not shown the level of commitments that the developing countries expected from them in both mitigation and adaptation obligations. Mitigation measures are geared towards the reduction of the emissions of the harmful gases especially carbon dioxide (CO2) in the atmosphere thereby halting and possibly reversing climate change from approaching a dangerous level that the scientists say will bring about irreversible destructions of the world climate system. The scientists are convinced, that to avoid getting to the precipice, emissions of greenhouse gases must be such that the rise in temperature remains below 2% of the preindustrial level. Any rise beyond that would jeopardize the global climate system. In this regard, the contention is largely between the UN environmental agencies and the Annex 1 countries who must cut the excessive emissions of these gases especially the United States of America and China the two biggest emitters of CO2 to make emission cut pledges that are consistent with the requirements of the scientific community.

The Paris 2015 climate agreement is regarded as a landmark agreement that the world has collectively achieved especially on emission targets. Until the accession of Mr. Donald Trump into the office of the President of the United States in 2016.

Adaptation, on the other hand, aims at ameliorating the impacts of climate change especially on the most vulnerable countries that bear the brunt of the changes that are being witnessed in the global climatic system. This is where the contention is largely between the developed industrialized (Annex 1) countries and the developing (Annex II) countries. The argument put forward by the distributive justice theorists and which the developing countries adopted is anchored on the fact that the developed countries are responsible for the concentration of the anthropogenic greenhouse gases in the atmosphere since the beginning of the industrial revolution. Hence they have the historical/moral responsibility to provide the funds to assist the developing countries for adaptation policies given the fact that they did not contribute to the climate crisis and are ironically bearing the burden of climate change. They argue that if justice is to be remedied, the stronger subjects should support and assist the weaker, vulnerable ones (Gresso: 3).

According to Gresso, the justice for international adaptation funding framework is based on two elements. The first is "procedural justice" which is concerned with conditions around agenda-setting, the parties in the negotiation, and the rules of negotiations between the developed and developing countries. It emphasizes the fairness of the procedure in terms of the

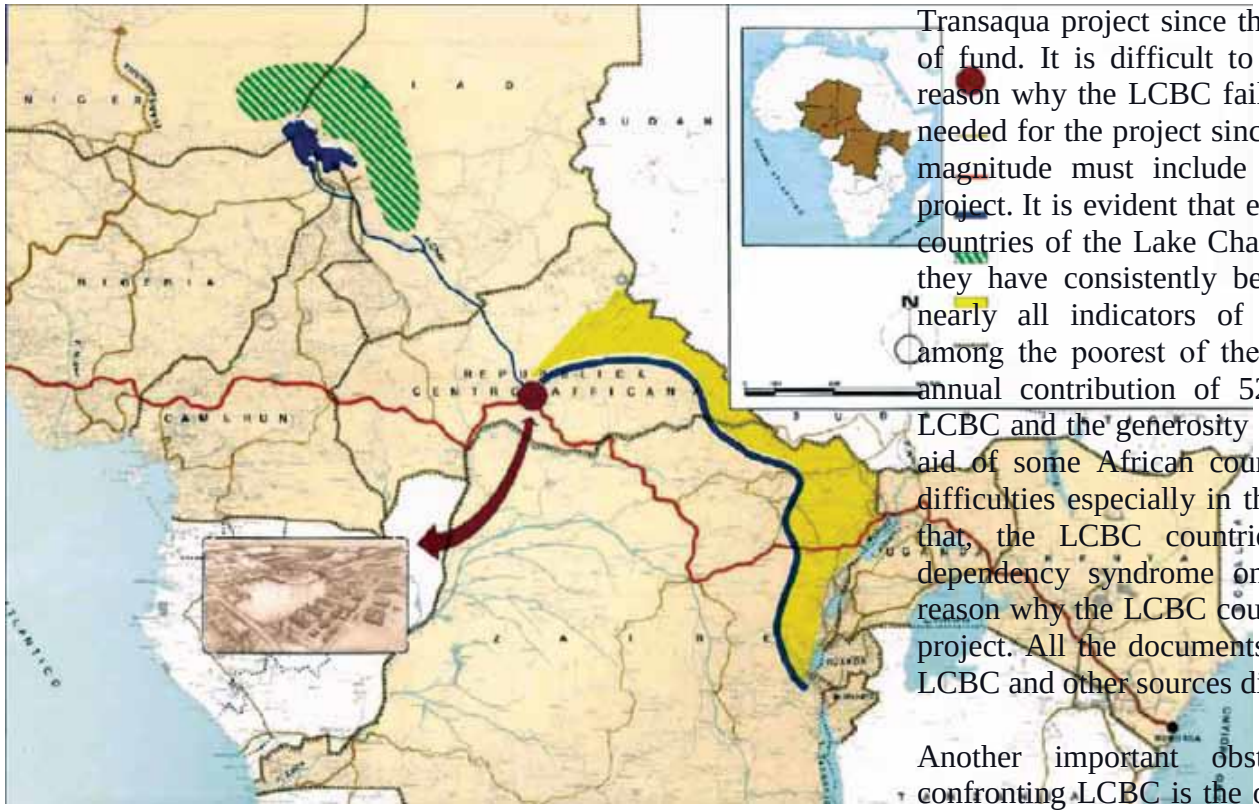
involvement of all the parties, not just the developed industrialized countries of the Annex 1 category. The second element is "distributive justice" which focuses on the responsibility for climate impact as the basis for raising funds and vulnerability to climate impact as the benchmark for allocating such funds. In other words, the polluter should pay for adaptation measures and that allocation of funds should not only be based on biophysical vulnerability but also the social, economic, and institutional capabilities of countries impacted by climate change should be considered. This position gained the acceptance of the conference of the parties. Article 4 of the UNFCCC and Article 12.8 of the Kyoto Protocol state that assistance is du particularly to developing countries, while Article 4.9 explicitly refers to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) as recipients of funding of technology transfer.

Consequently, it can be gleaned from the above that, the ethical position put forward by distributive justice theorists, which states that the polluter pays for both mitigation and adaptation measures i.e. the developed industrialized countries, was largely adopted to guide the negotiation processes between developed and developing countries. That the most vulnerable countries must be supported particularly to adopt measures that will help to ameliorate the impacts of climate change. Hence, Art 2 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) provides that climate financing to mitigate the impacts of climate change as well as for adaptation measures to climate change in line with the idea of low fossil fuel emission and climate-resilient economic growth by the developing countries will be on the "basis of equity and by their common but differentiated responsibilities and respected capabilities".

THE IDEA OF TRANSFERINGWATER FROM RIVER BONGI TO THE LAKE CHAD

The idea to transfer water in order to rescue the shrinking Lake Chad from drying up completely started during the draughts of the 1970s when it was realized, that the size of the Lake may not recover because at that time the rivers that feed the Lake were no longer discharging enough water into the Lake due to the draughts and also due to diversion of water by the riparian countries for irrigation purposes. Several options were considered by the LCBC and one of them was the idea of collecting water from the tributaries of the Oubangui River Congo River in the Democratic Republic of Congo which empties its waters into the Atlantic Ocean to the Lake via the River Chari, the main river that feeds the Lake. This idea was developed by the Italian company Bonifica under its then CEO Mr. Francesco Curato who set up a team that carried out a feasibility study of the project led by Dr. Marcello Vichi. The Bonifica engineers calculated that to save the Lake Chad from drying up completely a 10-meter deep, 100-meter wide system of reservoirs and canals would have to be built through the length of about 2,400 km to transfer up to 100 billion cubic meters of water annually which would amount to about 5-8% of the Congo River's water. The project would consist of systems of reservoirs, water regulation, and hydropower production from the dams that will be built. In addition to these, a road would be built to serve the construction of the canal-dams system, which would ultimately connect the towns along with the canal system. Other benefits that would accrue from the project include an inland port and economic development area in the CAR as well as new irrigation potential which will allow the creation of an agricultural development area around Lake Chad. This proposal is term the Transaqua Water Project. From all available documents, this

idea was unanimously accepted by the LCBC and the member countries as the most viable proposal to rescue the Lake.



Source: Claudio Celani

The blue ribbon is the canal that captures some of the water from the tributaries of upper River Congo in the yellow catchment area. The canal then feeds the water across the divide between the Congo and Chari basins and into the Chari River at the red spot.

MAJOR OBSTACLES TO THE TRANSAQUA PROJECT

The number one factor that hindered the execution of the Transaqua project since the idea was developed has been lack of fund. It is difficult to definitively point at any particular reason why the LCBC failed to over the years raise the funds needed for the project since feasibility study of projects of this magnitude must include some funding mechanisms of the project. It is evident that even by African standard the riparian countries of the Lake Chad are poor countries except Nigeria, they have consistently been occupying the bottom rungs of nearly all indicators of development. These countries are among the poorest of the poor in the world.Given Nigeria's annual contribution of 52% of the total funds for running LCBC and the generosity of Nigeria in terms of coming to the aid of some African countries when they run into financial difficulties especially in the 1970s and 80s, it can be inferred that, the LCBC countries have developed some sort of dependency syndrome on Nigeria. This is most likely the reason why the LCBC could not raise the funds needed for the project. All the documents obtained for this analysis from the LCBC and other sources did not provide information on this.

Another important obstacle to the Transaqua project confronting LCBC is the objection raised by the authorities in the Democratic Republic of Congo to the project. On April 5 2018 while the meeting of the new feasibility study to be conducted by the Chinese Construction Company PowerChina and Bonfica was going to take place in Switzerland on the 7th of April, Congolese Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development Amy Ambatobe, was quoted to have said "There will be no question for the DRC to transfer the waters of the Ubangi River to Lake Chad," (Bodo) This decision would complicate further the problems of the Transaqua project. Several reasons were given by the Congolese authorities on their decision to stop the Transaqua project. One of which is

that the project will create environmental problems for the Congo. However, this clearly shows a failure of diplomacy by especially the LCBC. Whether or not the fears of the Congolese authorities are valid it is the responsibility of the LCBC to bring the Congolese onboard in all the stages of the project.

THE GREEN CLIMATE FUND FOR ADAPTATION

Although international public funds for climate adaptation and mitigation are in short supply (both the bilateral and multilateral funds), there are a few that are available for developing as well as the most vulnerable countries to access either as grants or loans or both. According to the News Letter of the Climate Finance Fundamental No. 3 of February 2020, "the largest sources of approved funding for adaptation projects are currently the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR) of the World Bank's Climate Investment Funds, the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) administered by the Global Environmental Facility, and the Adaptation Fund" (2020). Of all these funds, the Green Climate Fund is the most suitable for the Lake Chad Transaqua project, followed by the Least Developed Countries Fund to access.

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is a Financial Mechanism of the UNFCCC that became fully operational in 2015. Although the GCF operates under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, it is legally independent institution. It has its Secretariat in South Korea with 24 GCF Board members, equally representing developed and developing countries. Since August 2012 the Secretariat has been working to operationalize the Fund (Schalatek and Watson: 2019).The mandate of the Green Climate Fund provides that, it should provide supports to the urgent needs of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and African countries (Schalatek and Watson: 2019). In addition to the mandate of the Fund, it is also stated in the rules and principles guiding climate financing under the UNFCCC and the Paris Climate Change Agreement of 2015 that, "Financing, technology and capacity building to be made available to the most vulnerable countries internationally and population groups within countries as directly as possible (eliminating multilateral intermediary agencies where not needed and strengthening national institutional capacity)". The GCF is mandated by the COP to channel a significant share of all new multilateral funding to adaptation projects. It is clear from the mandate of the Fund that the Transaqua project is within the mandate of the Fund. The countries of the LCBC are among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change as well as being among the poorest countries in the world.

ACCESSING THE GREEN CLIMATE FUND

The entire project to replenish the Lake Chad fits in properly with the twin approach of the UNFCCC of adaptation and mitigation of climate change. Both from the standpoint of mitigation and adaptation the LCBC countries are qualified to access the funds of the GCF. Whereas mitigation is defined as an intervention to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases or to augment their sinks, the purpose being to diminish their concentration in the atmosphere. The Transqua blueprint includes several projects that are essentially for mitigation. These include the construction of dams along the canal that will produce clean energy to the particularly Central African Republic and the Republic of Chad whose electricity generation stands among the lowest in the world. On the other hand, Adaptation consists of adjustments by human systems to actual or expected physical effects of climate change, variability, and extreme conditions (Grasso: 11). The main objective of the Transaqua project of transferring water from the River Congo to Lake Chad falls perfectly within this definition. So, the question then arises from this is, why are the LCBC and the riparian countries of the Lake Chad not

accessing the GCF to execute at least some parts of the Transaqua project? Several emails were sent to the Headquarters of the LCBC for answers to this and other questions but as at the time of writing this paper no reply was received. And all the online documents including those available at the website of the LCBC did not provide an answer to the question.

However, a breakdown of the countries that have received funding for various projects in Sub-Saharan Africa indicates that all the riparian countries of the Lake Chad have received one form of funding or the other from the GCF all be it in small projects within each of the countries, Nigeria being the biggest recipient got $ 100m for renewable energy projects for example (Climate Finance Fundamentals 7, News Letter of the GCF February 2020). This shows that if the LCBC countries pull their resources together in accessing funds from the GCF not as individual countries but as a group of countries with a common project to rescue the Lake Chad the GCF will come to the aid of the LCBC countries and at least execute some part of the project of the Transaqua water transfer. In other words, if all the LCBC countries can on individual basis access the GCF for small adaptation or mitigation projects, why can't they put their hands together to access the funds for the Transaqua project?

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the above that the LCBC does not appear to be thinking outside of the box. Because there is no evidence to suggest that the LCBC is exploring all possible avenues for sourcing funds for the Transaqua project since the idea of the project was muted in the 1970s. Particularly it has not shown interest in the Green Climate Adaptation Fund that is available to the most vulnerable countries as well as the Least Developed Countries of the world. This is even more so that the Transaqua project is a cross-cutting project; it involves both adaptation and mitigation purposes. While the actual transfer of water is for adaptation to climate change, the dams and canals to be built will be used for the generation of electricity (renewable energy) and irrigation agriculture throughout the length of the canal systems. This indicates that the Transaqua project and the LCBC countries are overqualified to access the Fund for the execution of the project. It is difficult to point out why the LCBC and the riparian countries failed to access the GCF since the inception of the Fund in 2005 for the Transaqua project. However, there is a clear absence of aggressive application of hydro-diplomacy in the pursuit of funding for the project. The belated objection that the Congolese authorities made against the project only further buttresses this conclusion.

On the other hand, the ongoing intervention of the Chinese construction company PowerChina under the Chinese government Road and Belt Initiative with the Italian government is a welcome development. When the details of the current joint feasibility study are out many of the answers to the many questions about the new initiative will be provided.

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