



***By Tosin Kolade***

The Technical Director of Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), Dr Mana Boubakari, has identified insurgency and climate change as major challenges to effective groundwater management in the region. Boubakari disclosed this at a side event on the sidelines of the ongoing sixth Africa Water Week in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.

He said it was sad to note that these challenges were worsened by the population growth in the region following inflow of refugees. According to him, no fewer than nine million people live in the region, whose livelihood depended on the depleting lake and if the problems of the basin are not addressed more conflicts and violence will erupt in the area.

"The activities of Boko Haram, effect of climate change, flooding, drought has caused poor yield in farming, displacement of communities, unemployment and poverty. The countries in Lake Chad Basin Commission need to sit down together and look at ways of enforcing best practices to maintain and protect the water treasures that we have."

Boubakari said the effect of global warming and inefficient management of the watershed had caused the displacement of both pastoralists and fishermen who depended on the water. He said urgent efforts were needed to scale up access to water in the region since the lake was shrinking daily. He appealed to all the nine member-states to ratify the water charter in the basin to enable it meet rising water demand.

Boubakari added that the commission was embarking on a campaign to save the region in line with the LCBC Common Vision 2025, and in the five-year investment plan.

While commending activities of the Multi-National Joint Force, which is fighting the insurgents in the region, the technical director called for more effort to secure the region and its infrastructure. Prof. Ibrahim Goni, from the University of Maiduguri, also stressed the need to manage the basin saying it is the only source of ground water for the people.

He cited the lack in coordination between institutions managing water resources in the region as a big challenge. Goni added that deforestation should be discouraged by all to protect the region from continued depletion.

The 6th Africa Water Week, organised by the African Ministers Council on Water, (AMCOW), aspires to lay the building blocks to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goal on provision of adequate and equitable access to safe water and sanitation for all by 2030. It equally represents AMCOW's belief that effective and efficient management of water resources leads to the provision of adequate and equitable access to safe water and sanitation.