



Marriane Enow Tabi, UN Volunteer Monitoring Assistant with the World Food Programme in Meiganga, Cameroon, with a child from the Lolo refugee site.

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World Humanitarian Day: UN Volunteers in Cameroon support Central African refugees

United Nations Volunteers from the Adamaoua and eastern regions of Cameroon gathered with UN partners at the Lolo refugee site for a series of awareness and capacity building activities, as part of the celebration of World Humanitarian Day, 19 August. This was also an opportunity to pay tribute to the remarkable work accomplished by UN Volunteers in the humanitarian response.

It takes two hours to cover the 60 kilometers between Batouri, the capital of the Kadey department to the Lolo refugee site. Near the border with the Central African Republic (CAR) in the commune of Kentzou, the camp hosts a population of over 13,000 refugees from CAR. Fleeing a war-torn country, these vulnerable communities, predominately Muslims, settled at the site from the beginning of 2014.

In the field, UN Volunteers are at the forefront of humanitarian workers continuously supporting these vulnerable populations. Through birth registration, children's schooling, agriculture, income-generating activities and the like, they improve the protection and empowerment of these refugees.

Marriane Enow Tabi from Cameroon serves as a UN Volunteer Monitoring Assistant in Meïganga with the World Food Programme (WFP). She is one 30 UN Volunteers who joined the celebration of World Humanitarian Day.

"This year Humanitarian Day celebrates humanitarian women, which I find very timely!" she rejoices.

“ I have seen firsthand how my colleagues who are women humanitarians act first in emergency situations. They dedicate time and effort to support people in difficulty. It is a great initiative to pay tribute and recognize their contributions. --Mariane Enow Tabi, UN Volunteer Monitoring Assistant with WFP, Cameroon

The contributions of women humanitarian volunteers are well appreciated both in Cameroon and throughout West and Central Africa, particularly those serving with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and WFP.

Ms Nana Amoah, Head of the WFP Sub Office in Bertoua, emphasizes:

“ I was impressed, not only by the extent of their skills and experience, but especially by the support and enthusiasm they bring. They are very passionate about what they do. I wish to welcome as many UN Volunteers as possible. They bring a very effective added value to our priorities

Mr Baseme Kulimushi, Head of UNHCR Sub Office in Bertoua, shares the same opinion:

“ The UN Volunteers are doing work of the same quality and importance as our staff members. --Basame Kulimuschi, Head of UNHCR;s sub-office in Bertoua, Cameroon

Impact: improving income-generating activities

A few meters from the refugee site of Lolo, Saïdou Hadjaratou stands in front of a small *boukarou* (tent) which serves as a showroom. Dresses for children and adults, sandals, woolen hats and small bags are arranged around the place.

The 15-year-old girl, head down, handles the loincloth while pressing the pedal of the sewing machine. For the 6th grade schoolgirl, sewing no longer seems to be a secret. She has been practicing this activity for two years now and helps her parents by making clothes after school hours.

“ I am grateful to humanitarian actors, especially women who volunteer to bring us support. Their presence here uplifts us and gives us hope.
--Saïdou Hadjaratou, resident at Lolo refugee site

Not far from there, Hapsatou Housmanou, aged 50, focuses on another task: making soap. This is her main activity since she moved to Lolo refugee site five years ago with her entire family, of ten people in total.

"With palm oil, water and caustic acid, I make soap that I sell for 100 CFA, while staying at home. The problem today is that it has become more difficult to collect oil and caustic soda," Hapsatou regrets. "It is gratifying to how UN Volunteers are willing to bring us solutions," Hapsatou says.

Call for humanitarian assistance to promote sustainable development

Livelihood and development needs, including shelter, infrastructure, sanitation, health, nutrition and education needs remain a critical issue throughout the Lolo refugee site, where more than 50 per cent of the population is under 18, and where women and girls make up more than half of the population.

Indeed, the drastic reduction in financial resources during 2019 has had a major impact on the quality of humanitarian response both with refugee and host populations. According to UNHCR, it is necessary to increase development initiatives for refugees from CAR (about 286,000 in Cameroon), who are living in East and Northern side of Adamaoua.

Together with UN partners, the UNV programme in Cameroon celebrated World Humanitarian Day with the vulnerable populations in eastern Cameroon and recognized the efforts of UN Volunteers, especially women, in humanitarian emergencies.



West and Central Africa

• **World Humanitarian Day**

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