

Internal displacement in the context of the slow-onset adverse effects of climate change

Submission from IGAD for the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is one of the eight Regional Economic Communities of the African Union and is comprised by the Member States of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. The region is one of the most vulnerable regions on the African continent to extreme climate and weather events and two thirds of the region are arid or semi-arid. It regularly faces a wide range of natural hazards leading to displacement and other forms of human mobility, most commonly severe droughts and floods, but also landslides, earthquakes, and tropical cyclones, as well as effects linked to climate change, such as sea level rise, desertification and other forms of environmental degradation, and changing rainfall variability etc.

The IGAD region has one of the highest concentrations of displaced populations in the world. At the end of 2018, an estimated 8.9 million of the world's 41.3 million IDPs displaced by conflict and violence lived in the IGAD region. In addition, an estimated 1.4 million people were displaced by disasters between January and December 2018. However, the number of people displaced by slow-onset disasters such as drought are not captured in these figures.

In Somalia and Ethiopia, where more data on slow onset events is available than in other IGAD Member States, it is estimated that drought has triggered 1.6 million new displacements between 2017 and 2018¹. Many of the million-plus people who fled the severe droughts since 2015 have been unable to achieve durable solutions and are still living in displacement. Severe drought has also been followed by floods in many IGAD Member States in recent years, and these too have displaced hundreds of thousands of people, increased their vulnerability and eroded their livelihoods.

IGAD's policies and strategies on internal displacement

IGAD's work on internal displacement is rooted in several institutional initiatives focused more broadly on migration. First, the IGAD Regional Migration Policy Framework (RMPF) aims to reinforce the capacity of Member States to effectively respond to migration, including forced displacement. A number of recommended strategies to manage internal displacement are presented to Member States in the RMPF, including urging IGAD Member States to ratify and implement the Kampala Convention. Second, IGAD's Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI) aims to build the resilience of vulnerable communities – especially pastoral and agro-pastoral groups – to drought and other climatic shocks and includes measures for the prevention of displacement and the protection of the displaced.

IGAD has also established migration governance architecture at the regional and national level. This includes the Regional Consultative Process (RCP) on Migration established in 2008, the Regional Migration Coordination Committee established in 2014, and National Coordination Mechanisms (NCM) on Migration active in all Member States since 2016. The NCM is a governmental multisectoral coordination mechanism that coordinates stakeholders working on migration issues through a whole of government approach. NCMs aim to strengthen leadership in migration management, optimize the implementation of migration activities and facilitate the mobilization of resources to manage migration.

¹ [Internal Displacement Monitoring Center \(IDMC\), Africa Report on Internal Displacement, 2019](#)

Establishment of the NCMs in IGAD Member States is in line with one of the main objectives stated in Article 2 of the Kampala Convention, which is to promote and strengthen regional and national measures to prevent, mitigate and eliminate root causes of and provide durable solutions to internal displacement. While the NCMs in IGAD Member States do not consistently include internal displacement in their work in the same way, the NCMs are well-placed to coordinate a whole-of-government approach to preventing and addressing internal displacement.

IGAD Member States' laws and policies relevant for internal displacement in the context of slow-onset adverse effects of climate change

IGAD Member States are in various phases of developing frameworks to address the needs of IDPs in their countries. At a regional exchange on "Preventing, Addressing and Resolving Internal Displacement in the IGAD region" that took place in October in Addis Abeba, all IGAD Member States expressed political support in advancing the aims of the Kampala Convention on internal displacement². The Kampala Convention is an essential instrument that not only seeks to prevent displacement, but also to protect IDPs, including those displaced in the context of disasters and climate change. Djibouti, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Somalia, and Uganda are the states in the IGAD region that have ratified the Kampala Convention. Kenya and Sudan have not signed it yet.

In addition to the Kampala Convention, IGAD Member States have taken other legal measures in line with their national responsibility to prevent and address internal displacement. Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda are party to the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region. This Pact includes a Protocol on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons as well as a Protocol on the Property Rights of Returning Persons. Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and Uganda have policies on disasters, and South Sudan has a strategic plan that covers all phases of the disaster cycle. Uganda also has a National Climate Change Policy.

In addition, most IGAD Member States have national laws, policies, or frameworks on internal displacement. Kenya is the only IGAD Member State to have adopted legislation on internal displacement. Sudan and Uganda have national IDP policies, while Somalia has several sub-national IDP policies. Djibouti has yet to enact national laws or policies to recognize IDPs under its national laws, though is in discussion to domesticate the Kampala Convention.

All IGAD Member States have taken steps to address internal displacement in addition to adopting laws, policies and frameworks, including as follows:

- Djibouti adopted poverty reduction mechanisms and IDPs displaced by drought have received shelter and reconstruction assistance from the UN;
- Ethiopia launched a Durable Solutions Initiative (DSI), a platform for collective actions and cooperation to secure durable solutions to internal displacement, from the policy and legislative to the operational level. The initiative acknowledges that internal displacement is a development priority that needs to be addressed through coordinated planning and action across sectors, and to shift the approach from short-term humanitarian crisis management to long-term development and planning for future risks;
- Kenya established a National Consultative Coordination Committee to coordinate responses to displacement and a set of measures were put in place to redress the needs of IDPs;
- Somalia instituted a widely consultative and whole of government approach to internal displacement crossing 14 ministries and other institutions and also included IDPs in decision-

² [GP20 and IGAD: A Regional Exchange Series: Comparative Experiences on Preventing, Addressing and Resolving Internal Displacement, 2019.](#)

making processes. Another example is the Drought Impact & Needs Assessment that was carried out after the 2016/17 drought and provided the basis for the Somalia Recovery and Resilience Framework (RRF), which now includes durable solutions for drought IDPs as one of five strategic objectives.

- South Sudan undertook consultations with IDPs for the development of its draft bill on IDP protection and assistance and highlighted the importance of integrating the specific protection needs of IDP women, children and youth in formulating IDP national policies and frameworks;
- Sudan established a National IDP Centre under the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs to assist the displaced and support voluntary return;
- Uganda conducted a hazard risk profile of the entire country, with a database at the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) with biometric registration of persons in landslide prone districts and villages.

Despite these important actions, implementation of the Kampala Convention, laws, policies and frameworks requires improvement. Challenges to implementation highlighted by IGAD Member States include security concerns, limited institutional capacity, lack of resources and land for allocation, donor fatigue, inadequate data on IDP and returnee profiles, limited commitment of government stakeholders and the paucity of partners and technology for the prevention of displacement.

The following recommendations to the IGAD Member States emerged from the discussions at the regional exchange:

- Sign, ratify, domesticate and implement the Kampala Convention, using the AU Model Law as appropriate regardless of any current, imminent or past IDP crisis or lack thereof;
- Entrust one national coordinating body with accountability for the IDP response to ensure progress reporting against the Kampala Convention;
- Build social cohesion and reconciliation objectives into national IDP frameworks which have multisectoral prevention, early warning, response and recovery components.

Country experiences on supporting resilience, ensuring IDP protection and achieving durable solutions to internal displacement

IGAD Member States have the responsibility under the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction to develop national disaster risk reduction strategies, which can contribute to the prevention of disaster displacement. At this exchange, multiple IGAD Member states called for greater focus on disaster preparedness, monitoring and prevention. This includes building the capacity of communities on early warning mechanisms, for example through training on accessing higher ground in flood scenarios. In Somalia, seasonal recurrent displacement driven by flooding of the Shabelle river has been shortened in duration by building communities' resilience and investing in infrastructure and services at their place of origin. The severity of flooding has been reduced due to satellite imagery monitoring, timely closure of river breakages and reinforcement of the riverbank. Communities identified the areas requiring attention with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. The government monitored and supervised this work. The South Sudanese government also facilitates and encourages people to move to dry areas before flooding. The consortium Building Resilient Communities in Somalia (BRCIS) aims to improve the resilience of IDPs and other communities. Communities co-lead the design and implementation of the activities that provide a continuum of humanitarian and development assistance to improve short, medium and long-term capacities of communities and households to handle shocks and stresses. BRCIS monitors

displacement as one way to measure success. During the drought of 2017, BRCiS supported villages were not displaced. They were able to absorb and support IDPs displaced by the drought.

Uganda has also taken steps to improve preparedness, management, response and recovery with respect to disaster displacement. Political will is evident with two cabinet ministers and a directorate under the OPM focusing on disaster risk management that coordinate monthly disaster risk reduction platforms. Disaster risk reduction measures are being mainstreamed across sectors and measures to manage disaster risk and displacement have been included in the National Development Plan. Uganda is also drafting a law on disaster risk management.

Recommendations to better prevent, address and resolve displacement in the context of slow-onset adverse effects of climate change

During the regional exchange on internal displacement in October 2019 in Addis Abeba, the following recommendations were endorsed by IGAD member states that are relevant for displacement in the context of slow-onset adverse effects of climate change:

- Push for acceleration of ratification and/or implementation of the Kampala Convention
- Accomplish domestic implementation of the Kampala Convention through an inclusive process with all key domestic actors, starting with IDPs and host communities and required mechanisms using the AU model law where appropriate
- Integrate internal displacement in national planning processes and institutions, including peacebuilding, reconciliation and social cohesion processes, development plans, disaster risk reduction strategies and national data collection systems in line with commitments under the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available through national and sub-national budgets and national development plans to prevent the conditions that lead to displacement, protect and assist IDPs, planning and achievement of durable solutions
- Advocate for and mobilize additional flexible and multi-year funding for programmes across the continuum of internal displacement from prevention to durable solutions
- Prevention: Increase the focus on and investment in measures to predict, mitigate, prevent and eliminate the root causes of internal displacement through approaches that incorporate equitable development, human security, peace-building, disaster risk management and climate-change adaptation strategies
- Strengthen the protection and resilience of at risk and displacement-affected communities using an inclusive and participatory area-based planning approach and building all their relevant forms of capital –social, financial, human, physical and natural in line with Sustainable Development Goals
- Integrate IDP statistics into national statistical systems and make the data available to relevant stakeholders with appropriate data protection and safeguard mechanisms