

Concept note

IGAD Support Platform for Implementation of the Nairobi Declaration

Introduction and Context

This concept note sets forth a proposal to sustain the momentum and galvanize additional support for the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and Plan of Action, as well as subsequent Declarations and Plans of Action, all referred to as the IGAD Process. This is in line with the global process as endorsed by the UN General Assembly which lead to the affirmation of the [global compact on refugees](#) (GCR).

In March 2017, IGAD convened a Special Summit on durable solutions for Somali refugees and reintegration of returnees in Somalia. The Summit recognized the regional nature of impacts and solutions for both displacement and mixed migration, and called for a strengthened framework for regional integration and cooperation. The Summit adopted the Nairobi Action Plan, which called for a paradigm shift in addressing forced displacement and mixed migration from a humanitarian and security challenge, to a development challenge. The Summit mandated IGAD to operationalise, follow-up and monitor the implementation of the commitments of Nairobi Action Plan in collaboration with UNHCR, other development and operational partners, the private sector, civil society organizations, youth and women groups among others. The roll out and operationalization of the Nairobi Plan of Action is considered to be a regional application of the Global Compact for Refugees and its accompanying Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).

Following extensive discussions at technical level, notably in the margins of the Djibouti Education Conference, suggestion was made to extend the Nairobi Declaration and Action Plan to all persons of concern (PoCs) on IGAD territory, including those originating from outside the confines of IGAD Member States. This was approved. Hence the IGAD Process covers all refugees and returnees in IGAD Member States.

Currently, the operationalization, follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of the Nairobi Action Plan is carried out through an annual Inter-Ministerial stocktaking meeting and various thematic meetings.

As such, key element to operationalize the respective commitments made in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the Nairobi Declaration for Refugees and Returnees was the identification of key sectors compounded by a series of actions to be taken. Education, Health and Livelihoods were the key sectors identified, and a set of regional thematic forums on these three specific themes aimed at sharing experiences and best practices, identifying bottlenecks and challenges faced, and setting targets and milestones in the implementation of the Nairobi Action Plan. For example, in the [Djibouti Declaration on Regional Refugee Education](#)¹, IGAD Member States commit to including refugees in national education systems by 2020. On livelihoods and self-reliance for refugees, returnees and host communities, a regional thematic ministerial and expert meeting on 25-28 March 2019 in Kampala, Uganda adopted the far-reaching [Kampala Declaration on jobs, livelihoods and self-reliance](#)

¹ See the Djibouti Declaration adopted on 14 December 2017 in Djibouti: http://www.globalcrrf.org/crrf_document/djibouti-plan-of-action-on-refugee-education-in-igad-member-states/

[for refugees, returnees and host communities in the IGAD region²](#). Indeed, each thematic Declaration is accompanied by an action plan with a clear requirement to translate the regional commitments into respective national frameworks for implementation and delivery. The third and last thematic ministerial conference on Health is expected to be held by year end (2019).

Rationale and objective for the IGAD Support Platform

The IGAD process outlined above has in many ways inspired the idea of “Support Platforms” set out in GCR (see box below). The IGAD Support Platform will be complementing the existing IGAD Governance structures which was emanating as IGAD leading the implementation of its RMPF which derived from the continental policy framework. Linkages will be created between this Platform to support implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and the existing migration platforms such as RCP and RMCC. The Inter-Ministerial Committee to oversee the implementation of Nairobi Declaration will be reporting the progress to the overall Ministerial Committee for the Migration. All these structures will contribute to monitor the regional implementation of the New York Declaration for Migration and Refugees.

Support Platforms as set out in the GCR

Under the GCR, Support Platforms are led by a group of States that are committed to providing support in solving complex or protracted refugee situations, along with other key players, including international finance institutions, development actors, the private sector and civil society. The Support Platform is a flexible modality for the provision of situation-specific support from the international community. The GCR notes two criteria for its activation:

- a large-scale and/or complex refugee situation where the response capacity of a host State is or is expected to be overwhelmed; or
- a protracted refugee situation where the host State(s) require(s) considerable additional support, and/or a major opportunity for a solution arises (e.g. large-scale voluntary repatriation to the country of origin or a comprehensive solution to responsibly end a specific situation).

A Support Platform would be led by a group of States that are committed to providing support, and would benefit from the engagement of other stakeholders as appropriate (including regional and sub-

regional mechanisms and groupings, international organizations, international financial institutions, civil society, and the private sector). The functions of a Support Platform would include:

- galvanizing political commitment and advocacy for prevention, protection, response and solutions;
- mobilizing financial, material and technical assistance, as well as resettlement and complementary pathways for admission to third countries;
- facilitating coherent humanitarian and development responses, including through the early and sustained engagement of development actors; and
- supporting comprehensive policy initiatives to ease pressure on host countries, build resilience and self-reliance, and find solutions.

The global compact leaves considerable room for maneuver when it comes to many of the specifics of how the Support Platforms would be composed and operate, meaning that each Support Platform can be structured and can operate in a manner best suited to the situation at hand.

² Kampala Declaration, Kampala, Uganda 28 March 2019: <https://www.unhcr.org/afr/publications/legal/5c9dd6384/kampala-declaration-on-jobs-livelihoods-self-reliance-for-refugees-returnees.html>

There have been significant political commitments made by IGAD Member States, the demonstration of shared responsibility to advance the implementation of these commitments is the next natural step where the IGAD Support Platform will be instrumental.

The IGAD process for the implementation of Nairobi Declaration and Plan of Action will be regarded as the Support Platform for the IGAD Region which will aim to cement and sustain the existing IGAD-led process to strengthen international solidarity and responsibility sharing by:

- **sustain and galvanise the political momentum of the Nairobi Declaration**
- **mobilize additional support for the Plans of Action, particularly in the education, livelihoods and health sectors**
- **engage more actors including additional states, the private sector, civil society, development partners, diaspora organisations, academia**
- **follow up on commitments (declarations and plans of action) between meetings by setting up a process whereby the IGAD Secretariat supported by the core group would follow-up on the commitments**

Membership and working methods

Aware of the need for further enhancement of regional capacity and strengthening of cooperation for effective implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and Plan of Action, the IGAD Support Platform will be led and owned by all IGAD member states and chaired by the country assuming the chairmanship of IGAD (on rotational basis - currently Ethiopia).

IGAD member states could champion thematic issues (as currently Djibouti with the Education, Uganda with livelihoods, health etc.). The thematic pillars will constitute the entry points for focused contributions by other interested parties and entities, including (but not limited to):

- Additional States who have an interest and/or engagement in the region (e.g. Qatar and other GCC States).
- A coalition of private sector partners as envisaged in the Kampala declaration.
- Multi and bilateral development partners.

The IGAD Secretariat will serve as the Secretariat of the Platform.

UNHCR, EU, Germany, World Bank and UNDP will continue to form the core group.

Roles and responsibilities for Member States, IGAD Secretariat, the core group and mechanism of engagement for additional actors will be further defined.

In line with the current organizational arrangements, IGAD Support Platform members would continue to meet at the annual Inter-Ministerial stocktaking and two thematic technical experts' meetings every year.

Potential benefits of a the IGAD Support Platform

1. More visibility to the region and its recent advances

2. More partners mobilized
3. More financing & technical support (increased shared responsibility)
4. Translating into more protection and solution dividends for forcibly displaced in the sub-region
5. Ultimately, these will lead to a more peaceful and economically prosperous region, thereby bringing about lasting peace and sustainable development, which would culminate in prevention of forced displacement
6. Gradually, these will set this region as a model to be replicated elsewhere in Africa and possibly further afield.

Towards setting objectives and key outcomes of the IGAD Support Platform

Recalling GCR para 26: Support Platforms would not be fixed bodies or **undertake operational activities**. They would draw on pre-announced expressions of interest (including at the Global Refugee Forum) and standby arrangements. They would complement and interact with existing coordination mechanisms for humanitarian and development cooperation. In consultation with participating States, UNHCR would ensure regular reporting on the work of the Support Platforms to its Executive Committee, the United Nations General Assembly and the Global Refugee Forums, including to facilitate exchange of information, practices and experiences between different platforms.

The IGAD Support Platform will set objectives and key outcomes that are guided by the Nairobi Declaration and Plan of Action on Durable Solutions with 4 dedicated pillars to amplify impact in: Return and Reintegration, Education, Jobs/Livelihoods/Self-Reliance and Health.

An overarching objective may address coherence and efficiency of solutions-oriented initiatives in the region for refugees, host communities, returnees and other forcibly displaced as well as perceptions of the general public.

Pillar 1 - Return and Reintegration

- Creating an enabling environment for safe, sustainable and voluntary return and reintegration.

Pillar 2 – Education

- Djibouti Declaration and Action Plan on Quality Refugee Education (Djibouti, December 2017);
- The Addis Ababa Call for Action by the Second Conference of IGAD Ministers in charge of education held in December 2018 adopted the IGAD Regional Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Strategy for refugees, returnees and host communities.

Pillar 3 – Economic inclusion of refugees

- Kampala Declaration on jobs, livelihoods and self-reliance for refugees, returnees and host communities in the IGAD region (Kampala, March 2019), underpinned by a Plan of Action for the enhancement of livelihoods and self-reliance of refugees, returnees and host communities, and Comprehensive National implementation roadmaps.

Pillar 4 – Health

- The 10th Meeting of the IGAD Health Ministerial Committee held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (March 2018) issued a pledge on quality health care services without discrimination and the integration of refugees into national health systems for every refugee, returnee, cross border population and members of host communities. This is expected to be further complemented with a Declaration and Action Plan in Q4 2019 or Q1 2020.