

Migration Governance in the IGAD Region

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Migration can be broadly differentiated into displacement and mobility. Displacement is often-times forced while mobility is more desirable and voluntary in nature. The IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development) region covers eight countries of Eastern and the Horn of Africa including Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda. The region is characterized by both displacement driven by conflict and disasters – with drought being prominent and in most cases leading to famine – and subsequent mobility of people within and outside the region. Border communities in the region often share a heritage for instance with the Somali ethnic group spanning through Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya and Ethiopia; the Turkana are to be found in Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda. Mobility of people within the IGAD region is therefore to be understood with these underlying realities. This mobility has been complicated by conflicts experienced in the region, which has, however, not stopped the people from trading or interacting across borders.

Migration governance has emerged as one of the major challenges of the IGAD region. It aims at the delicate balance between facilitating mobility and addressing irregular and forced migration. This means alleviating voluntary, orderly, legal and safe movement of people as well as reducing and, if possible, eliminating and addressing both internal and external displacement and irregular migration.

Pillars of Migration Governance

For migration governance to be effective, four pillars must hold. They include first and foremost **norms and a legislative framework** both at regional (IGAD) and national level. The IGAD Regional Migration Policy Framework (RMPF) derives from the continental framework adopted by the African Union (AU) in Banjul in 2006. It serves as the guiding framework on migration in its totality providing strategic recommendations on various migration themes including border management, irregular migration, migration and development, climate change, disaster management and migration, migration health etc. Member states of IGAD are using the RMPF as a reference framework as they develop their own national migration policies, which make them comprehensive in contrast to the often piecemeal legislation approaches in migration management.

The second pillar is made up of the **institutions** responsible for migration. These should be capable, well resourced and clearly defined. The institutions relevant for migration governance can be found both at the regional and national level. At the regional level, the migration program of IGAD is key while at the national level, different agencies have migration related functions ranging from immigration, security, planning, health, agencies responsible for refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) or even humanitarian affairs.

Collaboration is the third key pillar, which includes the effective and efficient coordination, and cooperation among migration governance institutions. At national level, agencies have often pursued their very specific mandates as required by laws establishing them. For instance, immigration agencies have defined mandates on entry and exit. The division of responsibilities is e.g. clear on the governance of labour in, into and out of the country. There is, however, need for such agencies to work together to address irregular migration linked to labour mobility. Member states in the IGAD region appreciate the need for this interagency coordination and have resolved to strengthen their collaboration through the establishment of national consultative mechanisms on migration (NCMs) at national level. These mechanisms bring together all agencies with migration related functions to a common platform and understanding giving them an appreciation of the inter-linkages between their mandates and norms guiding them. Effective collaboration at national level feeds into enhanced collaboration at regional level. This is realized through the IGAD Regional Consultative Process on Migration (RCP), a dialogue platform that brings together member states of IGAD, key transit and destination countries to exchange information, learn and create mutual understanding on migration trends and dynamics, opportunities and challenges. The RCP was established in 2008 and has over the years through the annual dialogue meetings in various issues kept the member states engaged on migration. A technical platform, the Regional Migration Coordination Committee (RMCC) feeds into RCP discussions. The RMCC is a space for member states to explore mutual opportunities and challenges in migration management and has representation from member states heads of immigration agencies as well as those of labour. On an *ad hoc* basis and depending on the topics under discussion, the RMCC draws from other relevant agencies from security to health etc.

Norms, institution and mechanisms for collaboration are supported through the fourth pillar, **finances**. Migration governance is expensive and requires sustainable sources of funding and continuous resource mobilization, from border management to support to refugees. This has often been a challenge both at the national and regional level.

Migration Opportunities in the IGAD Region

Migration presents various opportunities for the region especially considering that by 2050, the population of IGAD will be 400 million in contrast to the current 226 million. It is also forecast that more than 55% of this population will be of a relatively young

age (below 20 years). This is against a background of a region experiencing promising economic development. Ethiopia has e.g. recorded some of the highest and consistent economic growth rates in the last ten years globally. Governance continues to improve which has resulted in increasing incomes, an emerging middle class in the region and a great potential to attract both domestic and foreign investment. An increase in income provides an opportunity for increased mobility for trade, education etc. In the past ten years, IGAD has shown significant achievements in building economically critical multifaceted infrastructure – in terms of energy, transport, Information and Communication Technology (ICT). If maintained at the current rate of growth, these achievements would put IGAD as one of the leading Regional Economic Communities (REC) in infrastructure development in Africa. Wherever there is improvement in infrastructure, human mobility increases, which is already becoming a reality in the IGAD region. Once some of the mega infrastructure projects like Lamu Port, South Sudan and Ethiopia (LAPSSET) are completed, mobility within Kenya, South Sudan and Ethiopia will be greatly enhanced contributing to trade as well. These transport corridors will also attract transnational crimes including terrorism, human trafficking and smuggling. Therefore an enhanced collaboration in information sharing and border management within the countries involved is paramount.

Gaps in Migration Governance

Despite all these achievements, gaps hindering an effective governance of migration persist. They include;

1. **Fundamental gaps:** migration patterns in Africa and the Horn need to be seen against the background of poverty, conflicts and political instability as well as the high disparity of living standards and natural disasters.
2. **The policy fallacy:** some states in the IGAD region still view migration mainly as something problematic. Migration is seen as a threat and a problem that needs to be dealt with. Mobility is, as mentioned earlier, bound to increase with rising incomes and deepened integration opportunities (transport infrastructure, technology) within and outside the region.
3. **The urgency gap:** the low urgency and low importance accorded to migration in the national agenda of some of the IGAD member states. Only a few have made efforts towards mainstreaming migration into their national development

blue prints even as diasporas remit money, inject new skills and technologies into member states. Efforts to manage displacement and more so refugees and IDPs are also hardly ever included in the national planning processes.

4. **The policy implementation gap:** Whereas normative frameworks exist at continental, regional and national levels, these are not self-executing, as they require institutions and collaboration among institutions to be effective. This push from the regional to the national and the subnational (local) level will be important for an effective migration governance.
5. **The comprehensiveness gap:** is related to the fragmented and adhoc approach in which migration governance has been designed and implemented in the past years.
6. **The knowledge gap:** a lack of understanding the complex nature, determinants and trends of migration and how to govern it.
7. **The capability gap:** attributable to the meagre resources allocated to migration governance and the resulting institutional inadequacies. The low priority accorded to the migration agenda and the low level of resource allocation devoted to migration remain formidable challenges to migration governance at the national level.
8. **The collaboration gap:** is related to the low level of cooperation, coordination and collaboration between institutions dealing with aspects of migration due to the cross-cutting nature of migration that involves several national and regional authorities with different mandates.
9. **End state compatibility gap:** the strategic end state of IGAD is enhancing mobility within the region. The main priority of many of the countries of destination in Africa – just as in the European Union (EU), however, is to contain and stop irregular migration from the countries of origin.

IGAD's Role in Agenda Setting and Coordination

There is a move towards establishing a politically led migration governance agenda for the IGAD region. The IGAD RCP true test is the generation of supply driven demand by demonstrating how migration governance relates to the member states development or poverty reduction blue prints. This is already captured in countries like Ethiopia and the evolving National Development Plan of Somalia. Member

states need to convene National Consultative Conferences (NCCs) with IGAD support to raise awareness on the IGAD Regional Migration Policy Framework with its comprehensive approach to migration. This will be supported with the development of a Model National Migration Policy that member states can refer to in the development of their own national migration policies. These actions will stimulate wider discussions about the establishment of migration governance architecture and the development of national migration policies across the region.

For the national migration policies to be effective, the following issues need to be considered:

1. Supremacy of political leadership, political determination as expressed in the budget, the mandate and focus allocated to the migration agenda,
2. The impact of internal displacement and regional mobility;
3. Surge in the political and economic (extractive) resources of peripheral land communities where displacement often takes place;
4. The primacy of focus on livelihood development of communities affected by migration;
5. The centrality of the participation of local communities in migration governance dialogue and cross-border migration governance;
6. Increasing trends of empowerment of the peripheral communities through devolution, decentralization and federalism;
7. The importance of local authorities in cross-migration governance;
8. The need for a paradigm shift from the securitization of migration and an increase in labour migration;
9. A shift of willingness on the part of migration governance agencies from a restriction of movement to a facilitation of mobility;
10. An increasing prominence of national agencies, ministries, other authorities and RECs on migration governance through a robust mandate and a proportional allocation of resources.

While states are at the heart of effective migration governance, IGAD, other RECs and the AU have very important roles that cannot be filled by states through regional and continental linkages, subsidiarity and complementarity. African multilateral insti-

tutions and pertinent UN organisations and agencies need to be engaged as stakeholders and partners. There is also a need for effective and mutually reinforcing partnerships between border agencies, the private sector and civil society organizations, particularly at community level. The private sector may share part of the burden of migration governance if provided with incentives in the form of migration governance, especially those related to hospitality, transport and aviation. For instance, some aspects of smuggling and trafficking could be combated through the private sector. These approaches might help to speed up decisions and the effectiveness of implementation of reform projects related to the governance of borders.

Conclusion

IGAD cannot offer a “one size fits all” strategy on migration governance to all its member states because each state is unique and has different resources, priorities challenges and needs. Policies on migration need a decentralised planning and implementation approach, which also encourage initiatives of propos-

als for programming by local entities. The goal is to enable the member states and local authorities to take responsibility for the governance of migration in their localities. For the long term, the objective of the IGAD architecture is to build migration governance from the local level upwards. For this, the donors, the UN and IGAD are to become a “backup generator or support system” for national coordination mechanisms, which will in turn act as a backup for local governance structures.

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