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IGAD and forced migration response in the Horn of Africa: Prospects and obstacles

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Abstract

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has taken a role of responding to forced migration in the Horn of Africa where wars, conflicts and disasters have generated refugees, asylum seekers, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and returnees. This role is within the context of the 2016 United Nations (UN) New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (NYD), the Comprehensive Refugee Response Forum (CRRF) and the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) that call for a multi-stakeholder comprehensive approach to forced displacement. The paper argues that IGAD's emerging policy frameworks and mechanisms like the 2019 Kampala Declaration on Jobs, Livelihoods, and Self-Reliance for Refugees, Returnees, and Host Communities, the 2017 Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and the Djibouti Declaration of the Regional Ministerial Conference on Refugee Education show the potential and prospects of an authority willing to play an active role in responding to forced migration. Moreover, IGAD can tap into its regional diplomacy, political leverage and ability to mobilize support from member states. Also, IGAD was recognized at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) organized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other stakeholders in 2019 for its role in supporting the NYD, CRRF and GCR. However, a number of obstacles pose a danger to undermining the organization's efforts, including the nature of the refugee problem, constraints of member states and the authority's limitations like declarations not legally binding, capacity gaps, the authority being more of a convener than an implementer and limited consultations of member states. IGAD is likely to fail if these obstacles are not addressed.

Keywords. IGAD, UNHCR, Horn of Africa, Forced Migration, Displacement, Refugees, Host Communities

1. Introduction

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) was established in 1986 as the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Desertification (IGADD). The founder members were Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan and Djibouti. Eritrea and South Sudan joined in 1993 and 2011 after the two countries gained independence from Ethiopia and Sudan respectively. IGADD was formed to assist member states respond to challenges of drought and desertification.

It was later renamed IGAD in 1995 and revitalized to expand its focus to security, political and socio-economic co-operation. Member states saw a need to expand the mandate of IGAD to respond to violent conflicts, terrorism, proliferation of small arms and forced migration to mention but a few. Among its objectives, is to promote peace and stability in the region where forced displacement¹ is major concerns (IGAD Treaty, Article 7). Article 13A(s) of the Agreement establishing the IGAD indicates that member states shall cooperate and ‘facilitate repatriation and reintegration of refugees, returnees and displaced persons’.

According to the UNHCR (2023), by the end of 2022, the Horn of Africa region hosted more than 4.7 million refugees and asylum seekers and more than 10 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The region’s top countries of origin include South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. On the other hand, Uganda, Sudan and Ethiopia are among the top refugee hosting countries in Africa and the world at large (UNHCR 2023).

Previously regional organizations had some role in humanitarian issues in responding to disasters, conflict resolution and management (Zyck 2013). Although many regional organizations had policies on refugees, few were directly involved in the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Where they were directly involved, “regional organizations generally provided mostly symbolic levels of assistance” (Zyck 2013: 3). For example, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) allocated \$15 million in food aid to refugees in West Africa with finances got from the African Development Bank and food delivered by World Food Programme (ibid). Generally speaking, refugee protection and assistance has traditionally been the work of UNHCR and other partners. In the case of IGAD, apart from the 2012 Regional Migration Policy

Framework that makes some reference to refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), its contribution to refugees and forced displacement is still in its infancy, starting around 2017 onwards. IGAD has been more active in mediation and peacemaking than humanitarian assistance (Siradag 2012).

However, it was the adoption of the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (NYD) and the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and its accompanying plan of action, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Forum (CRRF) which call for a multi-stakeholder comprehensive approach to forced displacement that brought regional organizations to the fore front of forced displacement response. The GCR and NYD “call for a comprehensive approach to addressing refugees and migration” (Carciotto & Ferraro 2020: 85). This approach calls for “multiplicity of actors and go beyond a country-based approach” (Durieux 2019 cited by Carciotto & Ferraro 2020: 85). The GCR specifically points a number of actors like “national and local authorities, international organizations, international financial institutions, regional organizations, regional coordination and partnership mechanisms, civil society partners, including faith-based organizations and academia, the private sector, media and the refugees themselves” to protect and assist refugees and to support the host states and communities (UN, GCR, 2018: 43).

A comprehensive approach to manage refugee and forced migration challenges calls for an active role of African regional migration and refugee frameworks (Ndonga and Wood (2019) cited by Carciotto & Ferraro 2020: 85-86). In this context, the AU has given support to regional organizations’ efforts of establishing (forced) migration agendas and policies in line with “a general trend of regionalization and pluralization in international and migration policies” (Dick and Schraven 2018:1). Therefore, as a result of the UN’s NYD, GCR and CRRF with a ‘whole society’ approach, regional organizations have adopted frameworks to promote and protect the welfare and rights of forced displaced persons and their integration into host communities (Knoll & de Weijer, 2016: 14; Lavenex et al., 2016:4).

Since 2017, IGAD has prioritized (forced) migration on its policy agenda and adopted a number of declarations and plans of action for refugees and their host communities. For example, the

2019 Kampala Declaration on Jobs, Livelihoods, and Self-Reliance for Refugees, Returnees, and Host Communities, the 2018 Declaration of the 10th IGAD Health Ministerial Committee Meeting on Refugees & Other Cross Border Health Programs; the 2017 Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and the 2017 Djibouti Declaration of the Regional Ministerial Conference on Refugee Education. Several regional sharing meetings, seminars and symposiums have been organized together with other stakeholders on internal displacement.

This article discusses the prospects and challenges of IGAD's recent efforts, policies and frameworks in its response to forced migration in the context of the NYD, CRRF and GCR that call for a multi-stakeholder and comprehensive approach to dealing with refugees and forced displacement. This article uses the case of IGAD and seeks to contribute to the understanding of the role of regional organizations, their potential, prospects and obstacles. The article's main argument is that the chances of IGAD's response to forced migration are slim because of several obstacles that include the high number and protracted nature of refugees, constraints of member states and the authority's limitations like declarations not legally binding, capacity gaps, the authority being more of a convener than an implementer and limited consultations of member states. In the end, however, to avoid failure, IGAD can tap into its regional diplomacy, political leverage and ability to mobilize support from member states. In addition, IGAD has a chance to succeed because it has been recognized at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum for its role in supporting the NYD, CRRF and GCR. This recognition has a potential for appealing to donors for their support to the authority's processes.

2. Methodology

Qualitative approach was adopted for this study in both data collection and analysis. The study aimed at gaining a qualitative in-depth understanding of the role of IGAD in forced migration response using the different perspectives existing in the literature.

This study is based mainly on secondary materials collected from various sources. The data was collected from documentary materials such as textbooks and journal articles on refugees, forced migration, regional integration, (sub) regional organizations in Africa especially the Horn of Africa, magazines, newspapers, legal instruments, protocols and reports of UN, UNHCR,

International Organization for Migration (IOM), African Union (AU) and IGAD and the internet sources.

In terms of analysis of data, the study used descriptive and analytical techniques. Therefore, the research was based on systematic analysis of content of documentation. The data collected was subjected to textual and content analysis (Creswell 2009). The documents were subjected to the four major questions: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning (Scott 1990 cited by Payne & Payne (2004)). The analysis involved subjecting documents to external and internal criticisms. External criticism aimed to discover whether a document was both genuine and authentic. Internal criticism was about subjecting the contents of documents to rigorous analysis and interpretation. The next section focuses at IGAD's recent main initiatives in form of policies, declarations, plans of action, conferences and meetings in its response to forced migration in the Horn of Africa.

3. IGAD's Recent Main Initiatives on Forced Migration

As already mentioned, IGAD's experience on forced migration has been more on the provision of policy frameworks and declarations on some aspects of forced displacement like jobs, livelihoods, self-reliance, health, education and durable solutions. These are aimed at guiding member states deal with specific issues of forced migration. In fact, IGAD is more of a convener of summits and meetings and adopting declarations and policy documents (Research and Evidence Facility [REF] 2020). IGAD's recent initiatives on forced migration are further discussed below.

3.1 The 2012 Regional Migration Policy Framework

In 2012, at its 45th Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers in Addis Ababa Ethiopia, IGAD adopted a Regional Migration Policy Framework, inspired by the AU Migration Policy Framework for Africa (2006). The policy acknowledges the challenges and experiences of the IGAD region most notably civil wars and conflicts that have generated refugee flows (IGAD 2012: 6). It is noted that "the policy framework serves to provide the necessary guidelines and principals to assist governments in the formulation of their own national migration policies as well as, their implementation in accordance with their own priorities and resources" (IGAD 2012: 6). It further adds that "it is a comprehensive and integrated reference document and hence non-binding in

nature, scope and content” (ibid). Furthermore, it “guides member states on how to manage migration programs and gives recommendations on strategies to address various migration issues, namely labor migration, border management, irregular migration, forced displacement, internal migration, migration data, migration and development” (Urso & Hakami 2018:30).

The policy document analyses migration putting into consideration the challenges and situation of the IGAD region. It specifies seven important issues which are of great concern to the region. These include; national and international security and stability; crisis prevention, management and conflict resolution; rights of migrants; migration, poverty and conflict; migration, climate change, environment and adaptation; migration and gender; migration and the vulnerable groups (IGAD 2012 cited by Urso & Hakami 2018: 30).

The policy framework specifically addresses the issue of forced displacement and calls for the “need for established legislative frameworks, policies and structures giving effect to international protection obligations of refugees” (IGAD 2012: 35). It emphasizes the need to address the root causes of forced displacement and tackle conflicts and political instability. It also reiterates the need for IGAD, UNHCR and other partners to find durable solutions for refugees (IGAD 2012).

In addition, the document recommends that its member states should adopt and incorporate into national policies all the duly signed and ratified international and regional instruments on refugees and IDPs. They should also fulfill a range of other obligations to displaced persons (IGAD 2012: 39). At the same time, it acknowledges the challenge of protracted displacement situations in the region and called for the adoption of appropriate measures to enhance self-sufficiency of refugees and IDPs and grant them rights to employment, access to land, freedom of movement and other socio-economic rights (IGAD 2012: 40).

The policy framework came at a time of increase in refugees, IDPs, asylum seekers and other categories of migrants in the region. According to UNHCR (2012), the Horn of Africa had a high number of refugees. The top countries of origin were Somalia (1,136,100), Sudan (569,200) and Eritrea (285,100) refugees. The top host countries were Kenya (564,900), Ethiopia (376,400) followed by Uganda, Djibouti and others. Somalia and Sudan accounted for the majority of IDPs protected/assisted by the UNHCR (ibid).

Around the same time, the eastern route (Gulf of Aden migration route) witnessed increased numbers of migrants (mixed with forced displaced persons), particularly from the Horn of Africa, moving to the Gulf countries and beyond (AU 2018: 21). Similarly, there was an increase in movement on the northern route, which is traversed by migrants from mainly West and the Horn of Africa en route to Europe, via the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea (ibid). In terms of figures, in 2012, over 100,000 irregular migrants from Ethiopia and Somalia were estimated to be destined for Yemen alone, majority of who solicited the services of a smuggler via Bossaso in Somalia and Obock in Djibouti (RMMS, 2013). It was reported in 2012 that 85,000 Ethiopians crossed into Yemen with the aim of seeking employment opportunities as casual laborers and domestic workers (ibid). Therefore, the policy framework was in response to the emerging dynamics of (forced) migration at the time. However, despite the adoption of this regional migration framework, IGAD's attention and work on refugees and forced displacement became more developed in 2017 in response to the UN's global agenda on refugees.

One of the achievements of this initiative is for IGAD providing a policy framework to guide member states in responding to (forced) migration. IGAD has provided a regional forum through which such issues have been discussed. It remains to be seen the extent to which states are able to translate this migration policy framework into action.

3.2 The 2017 Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees

On 25th March 2017, IGAD convened in Nairobi Kenya, a special summit on the protection and durable solutions for Somali refugees and reintegration of returnees in Somalia. The summit adopted a declaration and a comprehensive plan of action for durable solutions for Somali refugees and returnees. The summit was deeply concerned about the Somali displacement crisis of refugees and IDPs (IGAD 2017a). The declaration further mentions the root causes of this crisis most notably; sectarianism, tribalism, terrorism, extremism and severe drought (Ibid). It calls for a comprehensive regional approach to deliver durable solutions for Somali refugees and maintaining protection and promoting self-reliance in the countries of asylum in line with the New York Declaration's CRRF (Ibid). Furthermore, the declaration supports the voluntary return of Somali refugees in safety and dignity including the stabilization and reconstruction efforts in

Somalia (Ibid). It calls upon host countries to protect and assist refugees. At a regional level, the document calls for regional co-operation on durable solutions for Somali refugees through the creation of an IGAD Multi-Donor Trust Fund channeled through the Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia. Lastly, it supports the international sharing of responsibility for refugees.

The above declaration is no longer only for Somali refugees. REF (2020:3) has argued that “this agreement was subsequently expanded to encompass all refugees in the region, regardless of their country of origin.” This was out of the recognition of other protracted refugee situations of other nationalities in the region. This initiative is now referred to as the “Nairobi Process” seeking to address the challenges of displaced persons and host communities under the ‘whole of society’ approach of CRRF and GCR in the IGAD region.

A roadmap on how to deliver commitments laid down in the Nairobi Declaration was approved in September 2017 (IGAD 2017b cited by Urso & Hakami 2018). As a follow up, on 22nd March 2018, there was a meeting to review the implementation of the Action Plan. IGAD called for “enhanced regular dialogue and coordination with humanitarian and development partners as well as the management of finances, including the generation of financing strategies in support of national, sub-national or sectoral plans and the delivery of results taking into account the increasingly diverse set of financial sources supporting refugees and host communities” (IGAD 2018a).

At the time of adoption of the declaration, there were 900,000 Somali refugees and a million IDPs in the region (IGAD 2017a). Out of these, Kenya hosted around 400,000. Also at the time, Kenya was threatening to close Dadaab refugee camp that hosted Somali refugees due to security concerns. It was reported that “Kenya has been pushing for the closure of the Dadaab refugee camp, citing security challenges that it faces as a result of the influx of refugees, who also include supporters of extremist groups” (Omar & Musyoka 2017).

In fact, in his opening remarks, the Kenyan president, Uhuru Kenyatta argued noted that “the refugee camp in Dadaab has lost its value as a ground for humanitarian assistance. It has become a source of terrorism.” (ibid). He further observed that "It is not acceptable to us that a space that is supposed to provide safety and assistance is transformed to facilitate agents of terror and

destruction," (ibid). Kenya for a long time had been complaining that Dadaab was a sanctuary or recruiting ground for the Al Shabaab terrorists. Kenya has been a target of terrorist attacks. For example, in 2013, the Al Shabaab attacked Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi killing 68 persons and injuring hundreds. In 2015, the terrorists again attacked Garissa University College killing 148 people and injuring others.

Other countries like Uganda that hosted Somali refugees (approximately 40,000) have also faced Al Shabaab terror attacks but not to the extent of Kenya. Uganda has not threatened to close settlements hosting Somali refugees. Overall, Kenya hosted a large number of Somalis and faced serious security threats. There has been a tendency to view Somali refugees as being connected to terrorism as evidenced by host states' responses. In fact, host countries have always viewed Somali refugees from a security lens (Juma & Kagwanja 2003). Therefore, the call for a solution to Somali refugees was partly as a result of insecurity in the region.

Secondly, the protracted nature of the Somali refugee situation and limited support from the international support also contributed to Kenya's push for a solution (Abebe 2021). Compared with other countries in the region, Kenya hosts a big number of Somali refugees. This was seen as a burden that had to be brought to a close by facilitating the return of refugees (ibid). In fact, the Kenyan president pointed out that "A refugee camp was never meant to be a permanent home, nor is being a refugee a promise of losing your citizenship and your country," (Omar & Musyoka 2017). He detailed that more than 400,000 refugees from Somalia have been cramped into the Dadaab refugee for more than two decades (ibid). He said the camp has always operated with a fraction of the budget it requires and the life has been hard on the refugees (ibid). He noted that it was the right time for the refugees to go back and participate in Somali nation building (ibid). It is possible that Kenya's attitude could have partly influenced IGAD's efforts on durable solutions for Somali refugees.

Overall, some achievements have been registered in the context of the Nairobi declaration on durable solutions. IGAD has provided a forum for discussing regional approaches to dealing with durable solutions to refugees. The Declaration and its Action Plan "comprises a wholistic set of policies developed by the governments and multiple stockholders together with UNHCR, civil

society, the private sector and the academia in the region” (Abebe 2021: 24). It has been argued that, “the need to find durable solutions to displacement, and to reintegrate Somalis who have voluntarily returned to their home country in safety and dignity, has been included in Somalia’s 2017–2019 National Development Plan (NDP)” (Carciotto & Ferraro 2020: 92). Furthermore, to encourage the sustainable reintegration of Somali returnees, a number of partners have come together to implement joint programs. One example is the Mogadishu Rental Subsidy Component which is a rental scheme that combines with livelihood and Housing, Land and Property services. In this scheme, around 80 households were provided with assistance for rent for a whole year, income generating activities, business skills development, livelihood services, information, counseling and legal support (Carciotto & Ferraro 2020: 92). After one year of implementation, there were some tangible results regarding housing and livelihoods. Thus: “Eighty-nine percent of the households were able to pay their rents, only three of 80 households faced an eviction threat, and only 10 of 80 had disputes between landlords or neighbors. One hundred percent of households experienced an increase in income; 55 percent had a monthly income higher than US\$100; and 38 of 80 households had two sources of income, a 16 percent increase” (UNHCR 2019b cited by Carciotto & Ferraro 2020: 93).

In addition, IGAD follow up meetings have been organized on durable solutions for refugees in the region. A few examples are the IGAD Member States Experts Meeting on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees in March 2018 and IGAD-EAC ministerial meeting on durable solutions for refugees in the East and Horn of Africa in June 2023 to mention but a few. Such meetings have been used to take stock of the progress and what needs to be done. This dialogue is important since it provides an opportunity for member states to share each other’s experiences and practices.

3.3 The 2017 Djibouti Declaration of the Regional Ministerial Conference on Refugee Education

On 14th December 2017, IGAD convened a regional conference on education for refugees bringing together ministers of education of the member states. At this conference, the authority adopted a declaration on refugee education including a plan of action. The declaration recognizes the disruption of conflict and displacement on the education of refugees, returnees and host

communities (IGAD 2017c). It reaffirmed IGAD's commitments to improving the access and quality of refugee education and reiterated the need to advance the integration of the needs of refugees, returnees and host communities into national development plans (IGAD 2017c).

IGAD member states agreed to take collective responsibility in ensuring access to quality education for refugees, returnees and host communities. They also agreed to integrate refugees into national development plans, policies and programs by the year 2020 (ibid). Also, there was the need to respond to the distinct learning needs of refugees and returnee school children (ibid). Finally, the declaration points out the need to recognize and validate the qualifications of refugees and returnees across all the levels of education (ibid).

At the time of adoption of the declaration, the region hosted a huge number of refugees and internally displaced persons. It was estimated that the region hosted more than 11 million displaced persons (UNHCR 2017). This includes 4.3 million refugees and more than 7 million IDPs being forced due to wars, conflicts and violence (ibid). UNHCR (2017) notes that the majority of refugees were South Sudanese at 2.4 million followed by Somalis approximately 1 million. UNHCR observed that 52% of the world refugees were children. In addition, refugees spend a long time in protracted displacement. UNHCR (2017) notes that "13.4 million refugees, representing some two-thirds of all refugees, were in protracted refugee situations at the end of 2017." According to Kabede (2019:318), "refugees stay in their host communities for 11 years on average."

Furthermore, "access to higher education among refugees, returnees and IDPs is very low at only 1% compared to 36% of the student population globally. The figure for Africa is still dismal, at less than 1%; and the same holds true for the IGAD region" (ibid). The major refugee hosting countries in Africa in general and the IGAD region in particular did not have a clear policy and strategy on access to higher education by refugees, returnees and IDPs (ibid). With these realities, IGAD made an attempt to respond and convened a ministerial conference on refugee education in Djibouti from 12th to 14th December.

Abebe (2021: 20) further notes that "Education is the single most important sector through which practical inclusion of refugees in national systems has been observed throughout the region. Inclusion of refugees in national education systems was initiated by the Nairobi Process. By and

large, “IGAD’s Djibouti Declaration on education has played a significant role in ensuring the inclusion of refugees in national education systems” (Abebe: 2021: 20). He notes that before the IGAD declaration on education, refugee education was not part of the member states’ costed plans. After the declaration, “IGAD facilitated a costed plan exercise through a multi stakeholder approach in its member states, supported by UNHCR” (Abebe 2021: 21). Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan are among the countries that have developed multi-year national education cost plans for refugees and host communities (Abebe 2021: 21).

Furthermore, since the declaration commits states’ recognition of prior qualifications and certificates for refugees and hosts, IGAD is developing a Regional Qualifications Framework (Abebe 2021). This will help states deal with recognition of refugee qualifications and certificates.

Member countries have also worked on refugee inclusion into national education systems. A number of countries like Kenya, Djibouti and Uganda have adopted the refugee education policies informed by the IGAD declaration on education and other international instruments.

3.4 The 2018 Declaration of the 10th IGAD Health Ministerial Committee Meeting on Refugee & Other Cross Border Health Programs

IGAD, in its support to CRRF process, has focused on refugee health. The health ministers met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 19th August 2018 to discuss the refugee and cross border health issues in the IGAD region. They came up with a declaration on refugee health. There have been three follow up meetings with the latest one being the 13th IGAD Health Ministerial meeting held on 25th March 2022 in Mombasa, Kenya. The declaration acknowledges the need to improve the health and wellbeing of people in the IGAD region including refugees (IGAD 2018b). It calls for the importance of supporting national health systems especially at the cross border areas with the focus on supporting and improving refugees’ access to health services (ibid).

It acknowledges the impact of displacement and refugee movements on national health systems and the need to for additional resources to improve capacity especially the cross border areas (ibid). The declaration further calls for the importance of integrating the health needs of refugees into the national health systems. The health ministers agreed to take collective responsibility for

all refugees, returnees, host communities and cross border population to have access to quality health services (ibid).

The above declaration was in response to the region's continued rise in forced displacement. According to UNHCR (2018), the Horn of Africa had more than 4.3 million and 9 million refugees and IDPs respectively. These were generated mainly by South Sudan, Somalia, Sudan and Eritrea. Due to increasing numbers, member states had a challenge of providing basic healthcare services. Furthermore, there were cross border health threats and pandemics like Ebola, Marburg, Cholera and HIV/AIDS among others. There was therefore need for member states to come together and respond to these common cross border health risks. According to Kenya's Ministry of Health Cabinet Secretary, "there was a need to stimulate conversations across the region and leverage on the respective comparative advantages to achieve greater efficiencies to better coordinate response to future pandemics, as well as other health emergencies and threats" (IGAD 2022a). He called for synergy among IGAD member states in dealing with challenges posed by emerging health threats (ibid). He further argued that "The need for countries to work together has been sharply thrust upon us. We now know, perhaps better than any time in the past that countries are more connected than ever before. A health challenge in one country can easily manifest in another & thus we cannot work in isolation" (ibid). The outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020 clearly demonstrates this concern.

In the framework of the IGAD declaration, member states have made efforts for refugee inclusion into health services. Some countries like Kenya, Uganda and Djibouti have adopted policies on refugee health, joint planning and budgeting between governments and UNHCR and ensuring that refugees and hosts access the same health services. For example, this is well spelt out in the Uganda Health Sector Integrated Refugee Response Plan 2019-2024.

3.5 The 2019 Kampala Declaration on Jobs, Livelihoods, and Self-Reliance for Refugees, Returnees, and Host Communities

IGAD adopted the declaration and plan of action on jobs, livelihoods and self-reliance on 28th March 2019 in Kampala, Uganda. The declaration is a continuation of the Nairobi process and specifically focuses on jobs, livelihoods and self-reliance for displaced persons and host

communities (Hopkins & Buffoni 2019). In the declaration, member states agreed to advance livelihood opportunities, economic inclusion and improve self-reliance of refugees, returnees and host communities (IGAD 2019). Furthermore, they agreed to seek durable solutions for protracted displacement situations and address associated socio-economic challenges. Most important was to develop, review and amend national policies and legislations to strengthen free movement of refugees within countries of asylum and expand access to labor markets (IGAD 2019). Finally, it was agreed to engage the private sector in stimulating job opportunities, supporting livelihoods and enhancing self-reliance (IGAD 2019).

Overall, the Kampala declaration reflects the aspirations of the CRRF and GCR by situating refugees within host communities and states under a 'whole of society' approach (Hopkins & Buffoni 2019). There have been follow up meetings under Kampala Declaration Forum. For example, the Nairobi meeting that took place on 24th to 26th October 2022. The main objective was to "mobilize and engage the private sector actors in the renewable energy space, in the provision of reliable connectivity and digital literacy, enhance final conclusion and ways to link markets as well as provision of social protection to refugees, returnees and host communities (IGAD 2022b).

The declaration came as displacement remained a problem with more than 4.3 million and 7.9 million refugees and IDPs respectively in the region (UNHCR 2019a). As already mentioned, these refugees spend a long time in protracted displacement. These refugees together with their hosts face high rates of unemployment and limited livelihoods opportunities. In one study done in a number of countries across the world including Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Sudan, Zetter & Héloïse (2016), observe that refugees face a number of restrictions on the right to work and states are reluctant to ease them. It is further argued that the majority of refugees work in the informal sector, but under much less satisfactory and more exploitative conditions compared with nationals (ibid). The study concludes that more national and international coordination is required, multiple actors should share in the responsibility to deliver decent work (ibid). It is within this context that IGAD adopted a declaration on jobs, livelihoods and self-reliance as a way of responding to the challenge of lack of or limited job opportunities for the refugees.

Prior and after the IGAD's declaration, a number of countries have allowed refugees some freedom of movement, the right to work and documentation. Also, donor agencies have initiated projects aimed at supporting livelihoods and employment opportunities. For example, the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) supports different projects in the region like the Resilience Building and Creation of Economic Opportunities. The World Bank's financed Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP) has supported refugee hosting districts. The issue of livelihoods is one of the priority areas supported by the DRDIP. Although more work needs to be done, some of these interventions have enabled member states respond to the needs of the refugees and the host population.

3.6 Regional Joint Consultative Seminars on Internal Displacement

IGAD has also organized a number of meetings, seminars and workshops on different issues of forced displacement. For instance, the authority has convened some dialogue on the theme of internal displacement, one of the serious problems affecting the region. For example, in 2019, the region had around 7.9 million IDPs out of 45.7 million worldwide. The majority were in Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia and South Sudan due to ongoing conflicts. As a response, in October 2019, "IGAD – in collaboration with the GP20 initiative and with the support of the Global Protection Cluster, the Government of Switzerland and the African Union Commission (AUC) – convened an exchange of experiences in supporting resilience and durable solutions to internal displacement." (Obila & Pop 2020: 74-75). This meeting was organized in the framework of IGAD's Regional Consultative Process on Migration, which is a platform for dialogue on migration related issues. It was attended by a hundred representatives of governments, national human rights institutions, experts, humanitarian practitioners, development actors and donor community (Ibid).

Furthermore, IGAD holds joint seminars on the 2009 Kampala Convention on IDPs in cooperation with stakeholders like International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), African Union Commission and UN agencies. "These serve as platforms to advocate for the ratification and implementation of the convention by IGAD member states and for discussion of the tools and support systems available to help them achieve this goal" (Obila & Pop 2020: 75). Also, in these

dialogues and discussions, member states have come out to show their work in protecting and assisting IDPs. This is positive as states strive to show their achievements and improve on weak areas for better reporting tomorrow. It is reported that, “One of the most encouraging outcomes of the 2019 regional exchange was the general acceptance of the importance of adopting and implementing laws, policies and decrees addressing internal displacement” (Ibid: 75). IGAD has used these dialogues and exchanges to mobilize and call on states to ratify legal instruments like the 2009 Convention on IDPs and make them part of their domestic laws and policies.

Due to IGAD’s engagements, as of October 2019, Djibouti, South Sudan, Somalia and Uganda had ratified the Kampala Convention. Ethiopia, which had signed the Convention, has since ratified it. Kenya and Sudan are yet to sign (Obila & Pop 2020: 74). Also, IGAD has managed to sustain dialogue on the protection of IDPs among member states. There is need for follow up on the states that are yet to ratify the convention and those that have ratified to implement it.

4. The Potential and Prospects of IGAD

The section above has shown the initiatives undertaken by IGAD to manage forced migration in the region. These are mainly policies, declarations and their plans of action. The fact that the authority adopted such mechanisms is a sign of an organization willing to play a role in responding to forced migration. Challenges notwithstanding, at least IGAD should be credited for showing the way. There is a small window of success, if the authority can utilize some advantages and potential at its disposal. For example, it can tap into its regional diplomacy and ability to mobilize support from member states and its international recognition at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum for its role in supporting the NYD, CRFF and GCR. It should use this recognition as a potential for appealing to donors for their support to its initiatives on forced migration.

4.1 IGAD’s regional diplomacy

Since its creation, IGAD has made attempts at responding to the region’s challenges. Through its diplomacy, the authority has mediated in Sudan, Somalia and South Sudan. It has further mobilized member states in the response to terrorism, desertification and drought to mention but a few. Although, its record in dealing with regional challenges is mixed with some successes and failures (Healy 2011; Adetula, Bereketeab & Olugbemi 2016), it has shown some level of

diplomatic engagement. Its new role of refugee response builds on these earlier diplomatic experiences.

Since 2017, the authority has launched a number of initiatives for refugees and forced displacement. In a study done by the REF (2020), it is noted that since 2017, IGAD has made use of its diplomacy in leading efforts for a 'whole of society' approach towards assisting refugee hosting areas. Using its good offices, the authority launched a series of initiatives that were referred to as the Nairobi process. This involved organizing meetings bringing together heads of state and government, sector ministers and technical staff leading to the adoption of several declarations. In fact, IGAD has been referred to as a 'political broker' in this coordination role (REF 2020: 1).

In line with the above, IGAD has engaged in advocacy mobilizing member states to respond to the needs of refugees. It is argued that "IGAD's comparative advantage comes from its ability to mobilize political support from member states to adhere to the CRRF and the Declarations at the highest level..." (REF 2020: 26). IGAD's success comes from its use of 'diplomatic pressure' among its member states and should ensure that they remain on course of the Nairobi process (ibid). These IGAD's frameworks are useful in responding to cross border problems faced by member states. Bereketeab (2012: 188) argues that "despite its limitations, IGAD is a useful tool for responding to the multifaceted problems faced by the region. These challenges have been going on for long and IGAD offers a collective and coordinated response. These complex problems can only be addressed at the regional level given their cross border nature".

In comparison terms, IGAD has performed well more than other regional bodies in Africa and beyond (REF 2020). It is noted that no other African sub-regional organization has initiated responses in the framework of the UN GCR than IGAD (ibid). Other regional bodies have to borrow a leaf from the IGAD region. Although, implementing the declarations has proved difficult (as will be shown later), the fact that the authority was able to bring member states together for consensus is no mean achievement. This was possible because of IGAD's leadership and should sustain this momentum if it wants to register some level of success.

As mentioned above, IGAD is not new to these responsibilities. It has played a role of conflict resolution and mediation of conflicts in Sudan that culminated into the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, the Somalia peace process for the establishment of the Federal Government and the South Sudan peace process involving rival factions of the South Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) (Kasaija 2015). IGAD is internationally recognized for these achievements in conflict resolution. We believe it can tap into this experience in its response to refugees, IDPs and forced migration.

4.2 International recognition

As mentioned above, IGAD's recognition for its success at "achieving visible results from the GCR was recognized as an example of best practice globally" (REF 2020: 3). IGAD has registered some achievements in prioritizing the 'whole of society' approach in line with the CRRF and GCR on its agenda. In the words of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, "this region and the countries in it are at the forefront of adopting new approaches to dealing with refugee situations" (IGAD and UNHCR, 2019 cited by REF 2020: 24). REF 2020 further quotes a respondent who acknowledged the contribution of IGAD in putting together the Nairobi, Djibouti and Kampala declarations in a space of two years. Dare and Abebe (2019) also acknowledge IGAD's achievements in the adoption of declarations to guide refugee response in the Horn of Africa. Other regional organizations are in the early stages of adopting similar responses to refugees and forced migration. For example, in West Africa, ECOWAS plans to implement its Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) Implementation Action Plan 2023-2026. The Southern African Development Community (SADC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), East African States (EAC) to mention but a few have been slow to establish responses to the GCR. All this recognition points to the potential of the authority willing to use its diplomacy in addressing forced migration challenges in the sub-region. Since the GCR puts emphasis on responsibility sharing, regional organizations are key partners in refugee response. They are partners to the UN refugee agency, UNHCR in revitalizing refugee protection and assistance in a world where the asylum space continues to shrink as refugee numbers increase.

It is important to support the efforts of IGAD to register success. On a positive note, a support platform to assist IGAD in its implementation of the GCR was launched at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019 (REF 2020). The platform is meant to mobilize political, financial, material and technical support and help IGAD in the implementation of its declarations. It is reported that the platform received funding from donors like European Union, Germany, Switzerland and the World Bank (REF 2020: 25).

It is the contention of this paper that despite the so many challenges of implementing its initiatives, IGAD's recognition is an opportunity for showing case the potential regional organizations have in response to global challenges. In the next section, we show that IGAD faces a number of challenges that will affect its potential to succeed. It will take great effort to turn around these obstacles.

5. Obstacles to IGAD's Response to Forced Migration

Despite IGAD's success in the mobilization of member states and adoption of declarations, there are a number of obstacles that will affect the progress so far registered. These obstacles are put under three categories: the nature of the refugee problem, constraints of member states and IGAD's limitations. We look at these categories in the subsequent sections.

5.1 The nature of the refugee problem

The nature of the refugee problem in the Horn of Africa is analyzed at two levels. Number one is the high number of refugees. The second is the protracted nature of refugees. The Horn of Africa hosts high numbers of refugees and IDPs. As shown above, by the end of 2022, the region hosted more than 4.7 million refugees and asylum seekers and more than 10 million IDPs (UNHCR 2023). In fact, "over two-thirds of all refugees and asylum seekers in Africa [3.5 million refugees] are hosted in Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda." (Abebe 2021: 31). This number is likely to increase due to the ongoing conflicts in Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. The region is also affected by drought and other disasters that will displace another sizeable number of persons [Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) 2023].

The high number of refugees remains a big burden to hosting countries. There is a high demand for services like health and education. These refugees are also in need of employment opportunities. Abebe (2021: 22) gives some statistics to show the increase in the levels of refugee students' enrolment in schools in Ethiopia and Uganda. Thus,

In Ethiopia, in 2017, 116,566 of the 344,330 school aged refugees were enrolled. Three years later, in 2020, 213,921 of the 315,411 school aged refugees were enrolled. This means the enrolment rate has significantly increased from 34% to 67.6%.

Similarly, in Uganda enrolment rate of refugee students has increased. In 2017, 43.4% of school aged refugees were enrolled in schools i.e., 267,337 of 616,523. The percentage has reached 57.6% in 2020 with the enrolment of 349,356 of the 606,401 refugees.

With funding shortfalls, these two host countries face a challenge of meeting the demands of refugee students alongside their own nationals. This casts a shadow over the objectives of the IGAD declaration on refugee education.

Furthermore, some countries like Uganda face challenges of giving land to the refugees due to the increase in numbers. This puts its self-reliance model in a dilemma putting refugee livelihoods at stake. According to Abebe (2021:31) "Uganda's self-reliance model is challenged by land scarcity as the number refugees in the country grew exponentially from 450,000 in 2015 to 1.3 million in 2019. The growth in the number of refugees has made the quantity and quality of land available to new arrivals is inadequate. As a result, 80% of Congolese households who arrived in Nakivale settlement before 2012 have access to land compared with just 17% of those who arrived after 2012". This complicates refugee self-employment and livelihoods. This poses challenges to the implementation of the 2019 IGAD declaration on jobs, livelihoods and self-reliance.

Secondly, the protracted nature of the refugee problem raises a number of obstacles to the implementation of the IGAD led processes. UNHCR (2004: 1) defines a protracted refugee situation as

"One in which refugees find themselves in a long-lasting and intractable state of limbo. Their lives may not be at risk, but their basic rights and essential economic, social and psychological needs remain unfulfilled after years in exile. A refugee in this situation is often unable to break free from enforced reliance on external assistance."

UNHCR further notes that a protracted refugee situation is one in which 25,000 or more refugees from the same nationality have been in exile for five or more years in developing countries (UNHCR, 2004: 2). Protracted refugee situations have been caused by the ongoing and endless conflicts in the countries of origin and failure to get durable solutions. Examples of refugees trapped in this situation include Somalis and South Sudanese to mention but a few. Although, the Nairobi declaration talks of the repatriation of Somali refugees and later extended to other refugee nationalities like South Sudanese etcetera, it is not clear to what extent this is going to be successful. Somalia and South Sudan are countries still affected by conflicts and insecurity. Any attempts at voluntary repatriation and reintegration are likely to face a number of obstacles.

5.2 Constraints of member states

5.2.1 Protracted conflicts, violence and disasters

IGAD member states are among the low developed countries faced with a number of socio-economic and political challenges including protracted conflicts. Some of the top refugee hosting countries like Ethiopia and Sudan are faced with conflicts that have generated hundreds of thousands of IDPs and refugees. Therefore, on one hand member states are hosts while on the other they are a source of refugees. These conflicts continue to generate new refugees and adding on the already existing numbers further complicating the situation. According to UNHCR 2023, by the end of 2022, countries in the region were among the top ten in generating refugees as a result of conflicts, violence and human rights violations. The figures were as follows: South Sudan (more than 2.2 million), Sudan (more than 800,000), Somalia (more than 700,000) and Eritrea (around 500,000). Member countries are also among the top ten in generating IDPs. According to IDMC (2023), by the end of 2022, the figures of IDPs displaced by conflict and violence were as follows: Ethiopia (3.8 million), Sudan (3.5 million) and Somalia (3.8 million).

With these internal challenges, these countries are constrained to protect and deliver services to refugees and IDPs. These countries also struggle to provide the same services to their population. According to a report of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in April 2020, 22.5 million people were severely food insecure in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. The situation got worse with OCHA (2022) reporting that communities in the Horn of Africa are facing the immediate threat of starvation, with failed rainy seasons and severe drought

in 2022 in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. Therefore, as long as these countries are vulnerable to internal conflicts, violence, drought and other disasters, their capacity to implement the IGAD processes will remain in jeopardy.

5.2.2 The impact of COVID-19 pandemic

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected the implementation of IGAD's declarations. In fact, the pandemic reversed some of the gains member states made in implementing the Nairobi process. The impact of COVID-19 has been felt at different levels: refugees, national and donors. For example, the school closures that were instituted as preventive measures affected both refugees and host communities. In a study done in Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe, it is reported that a good number of refugee school going children did not go back to school when schools reopened (Segadlo et.al 2021). Many girls got pregnant and others got married. The boys preferred working and other livelihood activities instead of returning to school (Segadlo et.al 2021).

COVID-19 further affected refugee livelihoods and income generating activities. Refugees lost jobs and their businesses closed as a result of the lockdowns (Kim et.al 2021) Unemployment has also increased for the refugees (ibid). These effects are not limited to the refugees alone but have affected the host communities as well. The impact of COVID-19 on refugees and their hosts will be felt for months and years to come.

The impact of COVID-19 was also felt at the national level. Host countries' economies were severely affected by the COVID-19 lockdown measures. Governments lost revenues as the priority was focused on saving lives. With this economic impact, host countries are finding it difficult to deliver services to refugees and host communities. There is also little appetite for refugee inclusion policies as these countries struggle with COVID-19 induced economic hardships (Kim et.al 2021; Segadlo et.al 2021).

The pandemic has further led to the reduction of aid since the economies of the donor countries were greatly affected. In fact, the effects of COVID-19 are spread worldwide and the developed countries were heavily hit in terms of economies but also loss of lives. To make matters worse, the post COVID-19 economic recovery has slowed down due to the Russia-Ukraine war that

started in February 2022. The war has not only led to the increase in fuel and food prices but also generally the cost of living around the world and the IGAD sub region in particular. Therefore, with the COVID-19 and Russia-Ukraine war induced socio-economic challenges, member states are finding it difficult to implement IGAD declarations and plans of action.

5.2.2 Different national refugee policies and implementation gaps

IGAD member states are not at the same level in terms of refugee policies. For example, in Kenya, “the current national refugee policy limits refugees’ ability to achieve self-reliance by limiting their ability to move freely, work, own property and enjoy other key rights” (REF 2020: 13). Kenya also maintains camps where refugees are settled, mainly Dadaab and Kakuma. The encampment policy restricts rights like movement, work and their agency. Although it has made attempts at refugee local integration through the establishment of the Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement located in Turkana West sub-county, this is yet to be rolled out in other major camps.

Furthermore, Kenya tends to view refugees especially Somalis as security threats. This has influenced its refugee policy making and implementation. For example, it has on several occasions threatened to close Dadaab camp citing security threats. With this negative refugee attitude, it is difficult for Kenya to fully embrace policies that will support refugee inclusion into national development plans. At first Kenya delayed adopting the CRRF structure or process provided for in the National Action Plan. But in November 2021 President Kenyatta signed the Refugees Bill into law that allows refugees to work and be integrated into the Kenyan society (Mohammed 2021). This law came at a time when Kenya still had camp policies in hosting refugees. This raises questions on how Kenya plans to harmonize the new law with its encampment policies and securitized stance towards refugees.

On the other hand, Uganda has fairly progressive refugee policies guided by the 2006 Refugees Act and 2010 Refugees Regulations. Refugees are allowed relative freedom of movement, right to work, to establish businesses and access to social services like education, health to mention but a few. Uganda further has the settlement policy where refugees live in gazetted settlements similar to local hosts’ villages. Refugees are given plots of land for cultivation and settlement. Through its Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) strategy and the Settlement

Transformative Agenda (STA), Uganda has focused on providing a holistic and integrated framework of support for refugees and host populations and the integration of refugees into national development plans respectively. Uganda has also adopted the CRRF and established a number of government-led national CRRF structures, including a CRRF Secretariat and Steering Group (established in December 2017). The Steering Group is co-chaired by the Office of the Prime Minister and Ministry of Local Government (REF 2020). Furthermore, “A Refugee Engagement Forum has also been set up to be linked to the Steering Group and provide a direct voice of refugees to the process” (REF 2020: 17). However, Uganda is struggling to maintain its open policies due to a high number of refugees and limited donor funding.

In addition, there is a challenge of the gap between policies and practice. We have argued elsewhere that gaps exist between what is provided for under national policies and laws and what actually takes place in real practice (Ahimbisibwe & Belloni 2020). A number of obstacles like security concerns, domestic and regional politics, xenophobia, high refugee numbers and lack of funding to mention but a few are likely to affect the implementation of IGAD declarations and plans of action. Abebe (2021: 32) agrees and argues that “even when policy documents allow refugees to access education, start a livelihood activity, access services but conditions on the ground may not be conducive to realize these rights.”

5.3 IGAD’s limitations

Despite IGAD’s success in the mobilization of member states and adoption of declarations, there are a number of limitations related to the authority as an organization that will affect the progress so far registered. These include the non-binding nature of declarations, capacity gaps, the authority being more of a convener than implementer and not enough consultations of member states.

5.3.1 Declarations are not legally binding

IGAD’s declarations are not legally binding. Although the non-binding nature of declarations can be positive and help states reach agreement, on the other hand, there is a risk of member states not taking them seriously and failing to implement them. It is up to the members to implement them or not. This is a challenge for IGAD going forward. A study found that, “a number of

respondents expressed frustration that IGAD-sponsored declarations are not legally binding” (REF 2020: 25). It is observed that the non-binding nature of IGAD’s declarations has left member states with the liberty to do what they want. “It is up to member states to codify at the national level commitments made in IGAD declarations at the regional level” (REF 2020: 25).

The non-binding nature of IGAD’s declarations can also be seen in its efforts for peace and security in the region. According to Adetula, Bereketeab & Olugbemi (2016: 32), “one of the challenges is the lack of enforcement of IGAD resolutions against member states, especially on the outbreak of conflict and humanitarian emergencies”. The same view is shared by Siradag (2012) who argues that despite IGAD’s adoption of protocols and declarations on peace and security, there has been a challenge of implementing them into practice. A number of times, these documents remain on paper as member states do different things in practice. For example, one of the principles of IGAD (same with AU, UN and others) is the peaceful settlement of inter- and intra-state conflicts through dialogue (IGAD Treaty, Article 6A(c)). However, member states have resorted to the use of force contrary to the authority’s principles. A case in point is the 1998-2000 Ethiopia-Eritrea border conflict, the conflicts in South Sudan, Sudan and Ethiopia to mention but a few.

This in a way puts IGAD’s declarations at a disadvantage of being sidelined at the implementation stage. However, this would be different if these were binding treaties with obligations. In fact, one wonders what happens to a member state that fails to implement these declarations. Are there sanctions or/and reprimand? Answers to these questions are not clear and this poses questions as to what happens to states that do not implement IGAD’s declarations and plans of action. REF 2020 points out many areas where states were not complying or behind schedule.

5.3.2 Capacity gaps

The authority has capacity gaps and if left unaddressed, they have potential to undermine its efforts. One of the obstacles is limited funding to support IGAD’s initiatives. IGAD has faced the same challenge in efforts for peace and security in the region. Healy (2011) reports on IGAD’s institutional weaknesses, modest secretariat, dependence on external donors in peace processes in Somalia and Sudan. He argues that the involvement of donors brought frictions of ownership

and the imposition of deadlines (deadline diplomacy) tied to funding. This was the case in the Sudan peace process that culminated into the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (ibid). Bereketeab (2019) concurs with this view that donors dictate on the way IGAD executes its work in peace building. As a result, “some critics argue that IGAD has simply become the executing body for the foreign policy wishes of its funders” (Bereketeab 2019: 142).

IGAD’s finds itself in the same dilemma in the response to forced migration. In a research conducted by Crawford and O’Callaghan (2019) found out that IGAD processes on refugees have faced a challenge of funding. It is reported that “while donors have signed up to the CRRF principles, predictable funding paths for the CRRF are still not clear, and thus far donors have shown little appetite to sustainably finance greater refugee inclusion into national systems” (Crawford and O’Callaghan, 2019: 4 cited by REF 2020: 27). However, some donors at IGAD meetings and engagements have expressed their dissatisfaction with the slow nature of member countries enactment of policy instruments for the implementation of CRRF principles and declaration plus failure to show justification for more funding (REF 2020: 27).

Since the adoption of CRRF in 2018, funding has been going down. In addition, although CRRF and IGAD declaration focus on “development-based support for refugee-affected communities, most refugee assistance continues to be dominated by humanitarian programs and short-term projects” (Forichon, 2018; Krause, 2016 cited by REF 2020: 27).¹ Relatedly, the study by REF (2020:27) found that “respondents from a range of backgrounds (governments, donors, NGOs, refugees and hosts) across all four study countries (Uganda, Kenya, Djibouti and Somalia) expressed concern that funding streams were insufficient” for implementing CRRF and IGAD declarations. Similar observations have been made by Carciotto & Ferraro (2020) who argue that funding remains one of the threats to CRRF and GCR programs on the African continent. They note that the international community has failed to support African states with development funds for the implementation of projects in refugee hosting areas (ibid).

¹ Between 2015 and 17, 70 per cent of overseas development aid to refugee-hosting contexts was humanitarian assistance (Forichon, 2018, p 9).

Funding shortfalls could be due to a number of reasons ranging from donor fatigue to the war in Ukraine. Most donor countries have shifted their attention to supporting Ukraine in its war against Russia and the millions of refugees and IDPs that have been displaced.

All in all, without funding, IGAD's initiatives risk failure and will largely remain on paper. Therefore, to avoid failure, it is important that the donor countries stand shoulder to shoulder with IGAD and the member states in their bid to support refugees and host communities.

Other capacity gaps range from staff shortages which have made the organization heavily dependent on consultants and inadequate communications with member states. This organization's shortfalls limit its performance and achievements (REF 2020). The shortage of skilled manpower has been reported as one of IGAD's obstacles in conflict resolution and mediation (Bereketeab 2019; Adetula, Bereketeab & Olugbemi, 2016).

5.3.3 IGAD is a convener not an implementer

Since 2017, IGAD has convened summits and meetings to either adopt a declaration and its plan of action or a follow up on previous discussions. The organization has succeeded more in convening than implementing what is agreed in these meetings. There was a complaint of IGAD being more of a convener than implementer of declarations and action plans (REF 2020). There was a feeling that IGAD's role should go beyond convening and focus more on implementing (ibid). It was further observed that "nothing substantial seems to happen between the Ministerial or Heads of State summits and the stocktaking meetings, and that there is a need for IGAD to play a more facilitative role and have regular engagement with countries" (REF 2020: 25). A UN official in Garissa, Kenya noted that "There has to be someone who can follow up. We are not using IGAD's full potential." (REF 2020: 25).

The same criticisms have been raised on IGAD's peacemaking activities in the region. Siradag (2012) and Adetula, Bereketeab & Olugbemi, (2016) argue that although IGAD has been successful in adopting several declarations and protocols on peace and security, they are yet to be translated into practice. As a result, a number of them have remained on paper.

While one may say that the above statements are too harsh on IGAD, it could be argued that perhaps it needs to do more work on ground, follow up and monitor projects in member countries. It can still maintain its role of being a convener, after all, it is a regional organization that brings together members states. But it should also be seen to be doing work at the implementation level. Unless this is done, the authority's efforts may not succeed.

5.3.4 Not enough consultations & engagement

Furthermore, member states feel that IGAD was not consultative enough. There was an observation that there was a tendency to rush these initiatives through without proper consultation. This was undermining ownership by states as they felt left out and not consulted. Siradag (2012) made a similar observation while analyzing IGAD's work on peace and security. He notes that "there is not such a strong coordination between the members, because while some are actively engaged in IGAD's programs and activities, others are not." Some member states have tended to focus elsewhere in other organizations like the East African Community (ibid).

REF 2020 reports that one donor official based in Nairobi, Kenya argued that IGAD was moving too fast (p.26). He further observed that there was "quick succession of ambitious declarations on Somali refugees (March 2017), Education (December 2017) and Jobs and Livelihoods (March 2019)" (p.26). In the donor official's view, "this was distracting member states from fully acting on their commitments" (REF 2020: 26). In the words of a UN official based in Nairobi, "IGAD needs to decide where in the value chain it wants to be. You cannot be everywhere and in everything." (REF 2020: 26).

It is further reported that "officials in Somalia felt that IGAD had not sufficiently consulted or aligned with the National Development Plan and other priorities when it came to the Nairobi Declaration on Somali Refugees and Returnees" (REF 2020: 26). In the same spirit, officials in Kenya and Uganda criticized the Kampala Declaration that it was "rushed through, without adequate time and opportunity for member states to absorb the implications of the commitments they were signing up to" (REF 2020: 26). It was further observed that "There was a sense that governments were not presented with all the facts and as such did not fully understand that, by signing up to the Kampala Declaration, they were in essence promoting

freedom of movement for refugees”. (REF 2020: 26). A donor official in Kampala, Uganda noted that “The ownership is problematic. The process was not right. If they had prepared [the Kampala Declaration on Jobs, Livelihoods and Self Reliance] differently, we would have a more conservative declaration but one that was perhaps better owned.” (REF 2020: 26-27).

Therefore, this points to the fact that “IGAD would arguably have a greater impact by moving at a more gradual pace and in a more targeted way, which might give stakeholders the time to absorb, consult and get on board with each Declaration” (REF 2020: 27).

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this article has argued that the chances of IGAD’s response to forced migration are slim because of a number of obstacles that include the nature of the refugee problem, constraints of member states and the authority’s limitations like declarations not legally binding, capacity gaps, the authority being more of a convener than an implementer and limited consultations of member states. In the end, however, to avoid failure, IGAD can tap into its regional diplomacy, political leverage and ability to mobilize support from member states. In addition, IGAD has a chance to succeed because it has been recognized at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum for its role in supporting the NYD, CRRF and GCR. This recognition has a potential for appealing to donors for diplomatic and financial support to the authority’s processes.

The insights in this paper have methodological and policy implications. From a methodological standpoint, it is important to analyze the different stakeholders in the response to forced migration. As mentioned above, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework and the Global Compact on Refugees call for a multi-stakeholder approach bringing on board different actors. It is important to answer questions like: what contribution can each of these actors bring on board? Do they have the capacity or potential? What are the gaps? What obstacles do they face? How can their potential be enhanced? The answers to these questions are relevant in the context of CRRF and GCR agenda for refugees and forced displacement.

From a policy perspective, while the UN has adopted the policy framework: The New York Declaration, CRRF and GCR on refugees and forced displacement; more needs to be done in terms of domesticating these policies at regional, national and local levels. IGAD has taken a lead in

enacting policies in form of declarations and plans of action. Other stakeholders need to do the same and put in place the necessary policy framework. However, as this paper has shown, policy implementation is equally important. It is not enough to adopt policies and not implement them. As the IGAD case has shown, more work needs to be done in the area of implementation whether by member states or the authority itself. This is a lesson to other stakeholders in their response to forced displacement. The international community, donor countries and the UN need to support the stakeholders especially in Africa at a regional, national and local levels so as to respond better to the needs of refugees and host communities.

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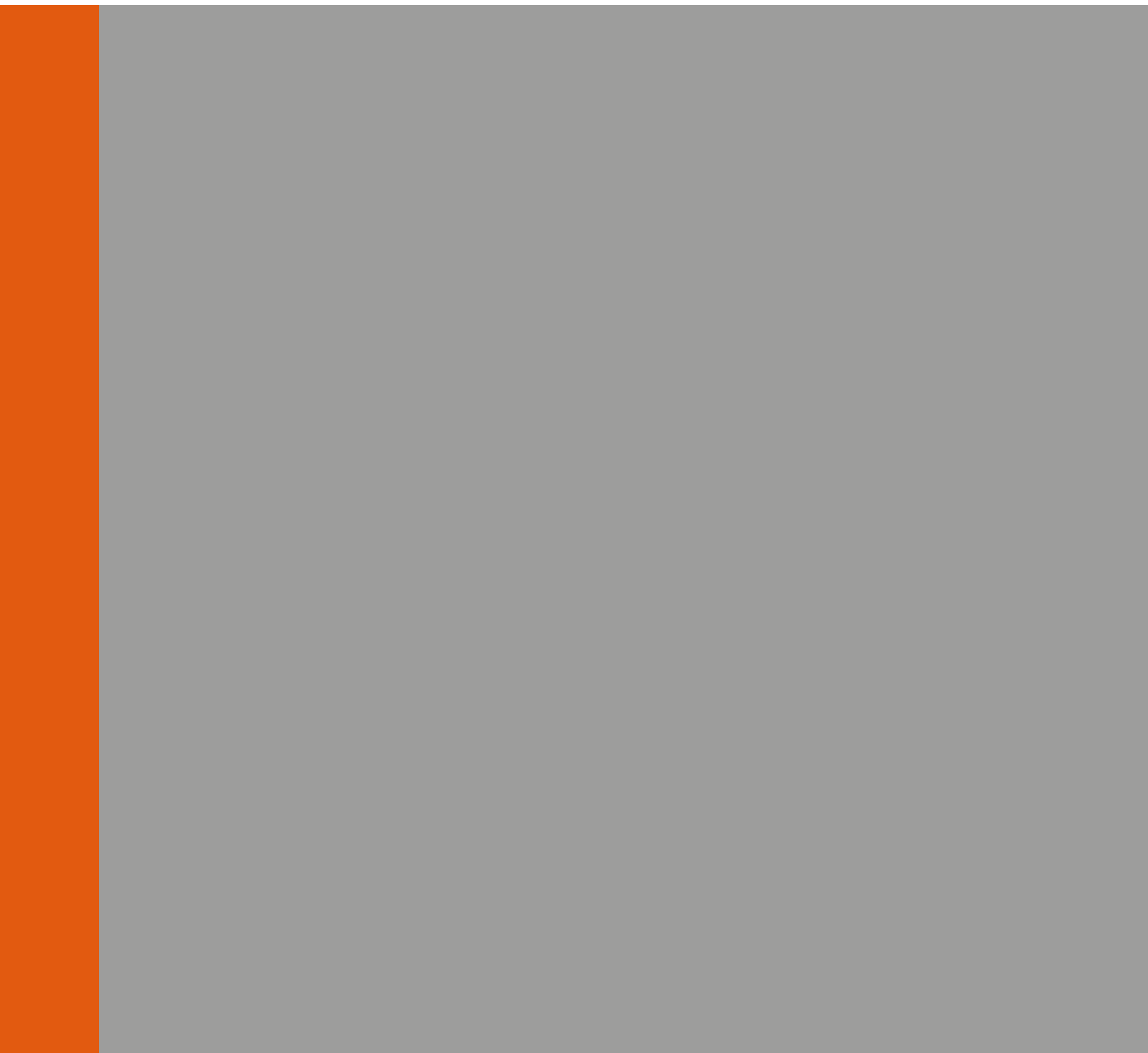
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