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Disaster displacement and risk reduction strategies in IGAD

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Analysis of IGAD Member States' DRR strategies, plans and frameworks indicates uneven reference to displacement risks and associated protection needs.

Displacement as a result of disasters has been a recurring and growing problem in the IGAD region.¹ In 2020, the region witnessed approximately 2.3 million persons newly forcibly displaced by disasters: an average of 100,000 disaster-displaced persons per month. When properly designed and implemented, disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies should address the risk of displacement and, if it occurs, support the protection of and provision of durable solutions for displaced persons.

Disaster risk reduction strategies designed in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (for 2015–2030) form an essential pillar for reducing risk and building a society's resilience in the face of disaster and climate change risks. They should also clarify the roles and responsibilities of the wide range of stakeholders involved in disaster risk management.

Target E of the Sendai Framework required countries to substantially increase the number of local and national DRR strategies and plans by 2020, with a ten-point scale used to assess the quality of their strategies and plans. Analysis shows that all eight IGAD Member States have developed or are updating their DRR strategies, plans and related frameworks in line with the Sendai Framework. Kenya, Somalia and Uganda have updated their DRR frameworks. Sudan, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Djibouti are revising their plans while the progress Eritrea is making is unclear. Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan's strategies have more references to displacement and human mobility with documentation on how to manage displacement if it were to occur, while Kenya, Djibouti and Uganda policy frameworks make less reference to displacement and protection

of the displaced. The contrast between the frameworks' incorporation of displacement issues can be seen in the following examples:

Kenya's National Disaster Risk Management Policy of 2017 provides mechanisms for proactive management of risk through mitigation, preparedness and early response to crises. The policy refers to providing resources for disaster risk management and to allocating roles and responsibilities to various stakeholders but there is no reference to how this relates to displaced populations. The policy lists various disasters which lead to socio-economic losses but does not mention disaster displacement. Generally, the policy fails to articulate clear measures with reference to displacement, reducing displacement risk, and protecting those displaced by disasters. There is no mention of human mobility or evacuation measures.

Somalia is in final stages of finalising its National Disaster Management policy. The draft policy explicitly states that "preventing further displacement and dealing with those already displaced" in the context of the country's multi-faceted crisis of protracted displacement is the biggest challenges in rebuilding Somalia. The policy makes it clear that "for all IDPs, it is essential for the State to provide them access to, and replacement of, personal and other documentation, and effective remedies for displacement-related violations". This is in line with Somalia's 2016 Disaster Management Establishment Law, which gives the Prime Minister's office the responsibility for protection for all those displaced by disasters. The policy further makes provision for the evacuation of vulnerable populations in anticipation of a disaster and for their inclusion in recovery programmes. State governments are obligated

to “ensure that relevant official records with respect to land titles, ownership and tenancy rights to properties, and ownership of bank accounts etc., are retrieved or reconstructed, if these were destroyed, as these will be crucial to individual household’s recovery”. The draft policy further notes that the process of building resilience to future disasters must also incorporate existing IDPs, who are often vulnerable to secondary displacement. Thus, the policy makes extensive references to migration, human mobility and displacement and measures to protect those displaced by disasters.

In **South Sudan**, the country’s Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management is finalising the country’s Disaster Risk Management Strategic Plan that gives some indication of its approach to disaster risk reduction and management. The policy notes that “Migration and internal displacement of populations have escalated due to... disasters, climate change, extreme weather events and competition for livelihood opportunities” and that rising temperatures have triggered changes in the pattern of movement for pastoralists. It details the particular vulnerability of those already displaced, both internally and across borders, pointing out that the likelihood of additional displacement is “very high”, because of conflict and natural disasters in the region. Thus, the framework makes wide-ranging references to displacement and protection in context of disasters.

Uganda has two frameworks guiding the country’s DRR efforts: its National Disaster Preparedness and Management Policy of 2010 and its National Disaster Strategic Plan of 2018-2022. The frameworks provide for an institutional coordination arrangement and funding strategy but make no specific reference to disaster displacement. Uganda is developing an accompanying DRM Bill on disaster risk reduction which includes some important provisions relating to disaster displacement, such as conducting risk profiles and identifying disaster-prone areas. Specifically, it states that the government “will assist affected persons to resettle elsewhere under a voluntary arrangement”.

Conclusions and recommendations

This analysis shows that there continues to be a need for further reform of the development of DRR frameworks to ensure that both the risk of displacement and the protection needs of the displaced are adequately addressed. The diversity in use and application of displacement concepts across these countries appears to reflect varying levels of understanding, and suggests a need to build awareness at policy- and decision-making levels. With the exception of Somalia’s policy, there is inadequate consideration of internal or cross-border displacement and protection needs of displaced people.

Countries should make use of the *Words into Action* (WiA) guidelines on disaster displacement and their associated checklist to ensure displacement risks and protection of displaced populations are more fully integrated.² Countries such as Kenya and Uganda that have already developed their strategies but with limited integration of displacement may decide to develop an accompanying Annex to their framework to better integrate displacement in the context of disasters. Comprehensive risk assessment and systems for data collection for monitoring displacement should be reflected in the policy documents. Inclusion of measures relating to awareness raising, early warning systems, disaster preparedness and evacuations would help reduce the risk of disaster displacement.

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1. Nyandiko N and Freeman R (2020) *Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation and Development Policies and their consideration of Displacement and Human Mobility in the IGAD Region* bit.ly/Nyandiko-Freeman-2020-IGAD; IGAD Member States are Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.

2. UNDRR (2018) *Words into Action: Disaster Displacement: How to reduce risk, address impacts and strengthen resilience* bit.ly/UNDRR-words-into-action



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