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*Policy brief:
the interaction between climate change, labour
markets and migration in the IGAD region*

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Disclaimer

This policy brief has been produced by Agulhas Applied Knowledge with national research partners in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Uganda. It is based on a) a review of recent literature published up to August 2022, and b) empirical data collected between January and April 2021. The policy brief does not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the ILO. A short bibliography accompanies this brief, with full references provided in the synthesis report on which the policy brief is based.

1.0 Introduction

This policy brief aims to support the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and its Member States to strengthen the role that planned labour migration may play in building resilience to climate change. The brief summarizes the key findings and conclusions from a research project on the relationship between climate change, labour markets and migration commissioned by ILO as part of *Free movement of persons and transhumance in the IGAD region: improving opportunities for regular labour mobility*, a research programme funded by the European Union Trust Fund (EUTF).

The research project produced three reports: a Phase 1 literature review and analytical framework; a Phase 2 empirical study consisting of three case studies of migrant experiences along selected migration routes from climate hotspots to urban centres and national capitals in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Uganda; and a synthesis report bringing stakeholder engagements, evidence from the literature and the three case studies together. This policy brief summarizes findings from the synthesis report and offers policy and operational recommendations for ILO, IGAD, its Member States and international partners.

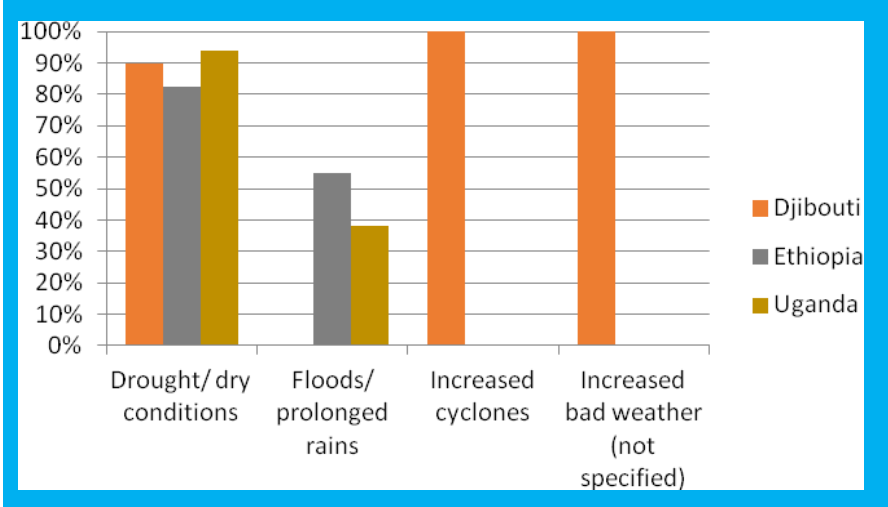
2.0 Interactions between climate change, labour markets and migration in the IGAD region: key dynamics and challenges

The relationship between climate change, livelihoods and labour markets, and migration in the IGAD region is significant but complex and highly context-dependent. Climate variability and climate change is already affecting people's livelihoods and their ability to provide for their families, with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) projecting that extreme climate events will increase in both frequency and intensity. Recent reporting from the ILO, for example, projects that an increase in heat stress resulting from global warming will lead to global productivity losses equivalent to 80 million full-time jobs in the year 2030.¹ While the effects of climate change are not evenly distributed, the East and Horn of Africa is host to some of the world's worst-affected vulnerability hotspots. Livelihoods in the region are particularly vulnerable to climate change owing to high dependency on the agricultural sector.

Although there is little robust quantitative data available to gauge the direct impact of climate change on employment numbers and types in the East and Horn of Africa, there is evidence of a gradual downward trend on the number of people employed in the agriculture sector, although it remains the predominant form of employment in the region. The clearest link is between drought and livelihoods, exacerbated by anthropogenic factors such as poor land management and overgrazing. This was evident in the empirical study conducted as part of this project, which asked respondents in three climate hotspots in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Uganda about the types of changes to the climate they had noticed (see **figure 1**).

¹ ILO, *Working on a warmer planet: the impact of heat stress on labour productivity and decent work*, 2019. [link](#).

Figure 1. Type of changes to the climate experienced in communities of origin (percentage of total household respondents reporting each type of change).



Data collected as part of the Phase 2 empirical study for the ILO.

The question of to what extent and in what ways climate change may lead to migration continues to foster debate. There is increased recognition of the links between climate change and migration, and consensus is emerging on the complex, context-dependent and multicausal nature of the drivers of migration. Climate variability and change is one such driver of migration but hardly ever acts alone.

Consensus is also developing on the role migration can play in helping communities and households to adapt to the effects of climate change. Although labour migration management often becomes tangled in political and security considerations, policymakers are becoming increasingly aware of the need not only to tackle displacement caused by environmental shocks, but also to harness planned labour migration as a longer-term positive adaptation tool employed by individuals, communities and states to offset or counter the environmental and economic deterioration and devastation wreaked by climatic change and variability.

In the IGAD region, there is a large variety in migration patterns and outcomes, between countries and also internally within individual Member States. Labour migration is an important option for individuals and households in climate hotspots to improve and/or diversify their incomes, but the extent to which this option is effective in increasing the resilience of migrants and their families back home is highly variable. If labour migration is to be facilitated as a successful adaptation option, IGAD and its Member States require more granular and context-sensitive information on the barriers to migrants’ successful integration into labour markets where they settle – whether in regional urban centres within their countries of origin, in national capitals, or across international borders.

IGAD Member States adopted the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons (and Transhumance) at the IGAD Council of Ministers on 24 June 2021. This sets out a clear road map for progressively achieving the free movement of persons, the right of residence and the right of establishment, including lawful access to employment. An important next step is to ensure that the protocol, and in particular Article 16 on movement of persons affected by disasters, is translated into harmonized and transparent migration and labour management policies at the regional and national levels that harness planned labour migration as a positive mechanism for responding to the environmental deterioration and

shocks wrought by climate change. In support of this endeavour, this policy brief presents the headline findings emerging from two phases of research on the relationship between migration, livelihoods and labour markets, and climate change. These headline findings form the basis for policy recommendations offered in the final section of the brief.

Climate variability and climate change are affecting livelihoods and migration patterns in the IGAD region in significant but complex and sometimes unexpected ways

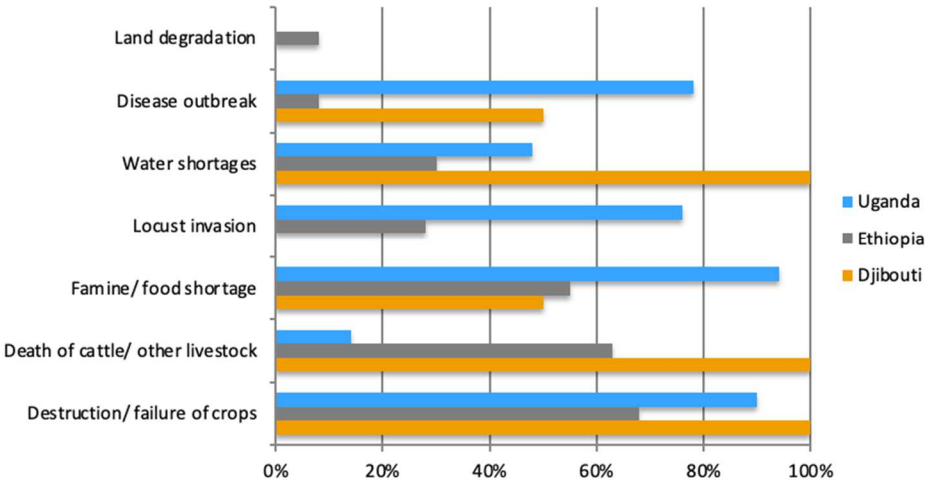
Climate variability and climate change is already having a significant impact on livelihoods in the IGAD region. Around 80 per cent of the region’s population relies on agriculture, predominantly rain-fed agriculture and pastoralism, and is therefore extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Individual households dependent on agriculture and pastoralism typically have little opportunity to recover between climate shocks. Drought is the predominant hazard, but the region is also vulnerable to flooding and rise in sea level.

“Previously, even during bad harvesting seasons, people used to reserve seeds for the next harvesting season. This year even the seeds had to be used for feeding the household because of the damage caused by the locust swarm. Many households in Oromia Zone are impoverished and dependent on emergency food aid. All of this has been a contributing factor to people migrating out of the area.”

Key stakeholder interview, Oromia Zone, Ethiopia, 2021

Figure 2 highlights the key impacts of environmental change identified by research participants in communities of origin in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Uganda.

Figure 2. Identified impacts of environmental change in communities of origin (percentage of total household respondents reporting each impact).



Data collected as part of the Phase 2 empirical study for the ILO.

However, there is no simple and direct link between climate change, worsening livelihoods and employment conditions, and migration. The relationship between climate change, employment and

livelihoods, and migration is complex and highly context-dependent. Climate change should not be seen as a monolithic cause of environmental or economic deterioration which then leads to migration. Even in climate hotspots, environmental degradation and shocks are joined by a range of other social, political and economic challenges faced by communities, including poverty, lack of access to financial services, low levels of education and localized tensions and conflict. Most often, it is the slow creep of multiple intersecting factors that add up to a decision to migrate – a combination of deteriorating environmental conditions over time, such as more frequent droughts, unpredictable rains and locust invasions – intersecting with worsening job and livelihood conditions, increasing poverty, and sometimes an increase in conflict and instability as scarcity worsens.

Climate-related migration patterns are therefore difficult to predict: how and when climate change leads to increased migration remains poorly understood. Push factors driving migration may include a combination of trends and events including poverty and unemployment, limited livelihood opportunities and decent work deficits, relative deprivation, persecution and discrimination, violent conflict, natural disasters, the impact of climate change, and famine. But less tangible factors also play an important role: in some communities, social norms linking notions of success and status with migration can form strong social pressures on youth to migrate in order to “make it”. Meanwhile in other communities, migration can be seen as an undesirable last resort. Thus, communities facing similar environmental pressures on livelihoods do not necessarily adopt the same migration patterns.

Internal migration is the most common form of climate change-related migration, and the boundaries between internal and international migration can be blurred

Internal migration and cross-border migration over short distances are highly likely to be the dominant form of migration in response to climate change in the IGAD region. Recent years have seen broad agreement in the literature that climate change is having a larger effect on internal migration than on international migration, and for those who cross borders, most climate change-related migration will take place between neighbouring countries, within the migrant’s region of origin. From the point of view of developing labour migration policies and practices that support adaptation to climate change, facilitating and managing internal migration within IGAD Member States is as important as dealing with regional movement and international migration across borders.

“Due to the loss of the farm animals whose milk they sold, many heads of households, mainly men, go down to the city in search of daily work like building or guarding, delegating responsibility for the household and some remaining animals to the wives. Some leave until the environment improves, others stay there and send money back.”

Key stakeholder interview, Kourtimalej, Djibouti, 2021

Lines between internal and international migration are not as sharply drawn as the presentation of migration data and statistics sometimes suggests. Migrants aiming to travel internationally may end up settling for long periods or indefinitely in transit locations. Similarly, some migrants who originally sought to move internally may, at a later point, decide or have the opportunity to migrate internationally. Migration can also be circular. This fluidity between internal and international migration is a policy challenge, since there is often a lack of connections and synergy between policy processes relevant to

mobility at national level and those aimed at addressing regional or international migration challenges. Harmonizing national and regional policies, legislation and processes across the IGAD region to support free movement and access to lawful employment will be a key step forward.

Both the opportunities and challenges of harnessing migration as an adaptation tool are significant

Labour migration can be an important adaptation tool for individuals, households and communities.

Labour migration can provide value for migrants, their families and their communities of origin through a range of different channels. It can allow people to find higher quality, better rewarded and more fulfilling work opportunities (especially for young people in countries with fast-growing populations); facilitate the inflow of remittances to family members and communities of origin; and promote the transfer of skills and technology, as skilled migrants move between countries and/or return to their communities. There are also positive impacts from labour migration at the macro level, in terms of promoting flexibility in labour markets and helping to meet labour market demands in migrant receiving countries (or regions within countries). A 2022 report by the East African Employers' Organization finds that well-managed migration – including the removal of bureaucratic and financial obstacles to labour migration – can be a boon for the labour market and the economy at large.²

It is important, therefore, to move away from framing migration as a failure to adapt. Labour migration as a social phenomenon, when planned and facilitated through national and regional policies, legislation and procedures, can be a driver for positive change and can reduce vulnerability and poverty by creating trans-local livelihoods, diversifying incomes and increasing remittances.

Many obstacles remain in fulfilling the promise of labour migration as an adaptation tool for both internal and international migrants.

Migrants – and especially migrants in an irregular situation – face a range of obstacles and challenges when moving in order to support themselves and their families. Irregular cross-border migrants often face abusive recruitment practices, including the payment of large fees to facilitate their migration, regularly embark on risky journeys (such as sea travel in unsafe vessels) and find it harder to secure decent work in transit and destination locations as their status and fear of deportation or detention mean they are often completely in their employers' power. While in theory internal migrants are not faced with the same lack of legal status and protection as international migrants in an irregular situation, in practice they can face similar challenges of discrimination and exploitation in the labour market, including discrimination in terms of wages and working conditions and unsafe working environments. Their lack of knowledge of and access to legal and social protection, representation and membership in trade unions can be compounded by difficulties in adapting to new urban lifestyles, local languages and cultures – all challenges highlighted in our empirical study. Lack of access to social protection is also linked to a lack of documentation and/or formal employment.

Many international migrants in an irregular situation and low-skilled internal migrants are therefore exposed to poverty, homelessness and unemployment at some stage of their journey. While

² East African Employers Organization (EAEO), *Mapping report: Labour Migration in East Africa*, Member Briefing, Sustainable Migration, 2022. [link](#).

international migrants can be in a vulnerable situation because of their immigration status and might not be covered by the labour law, in the case of poor, low-skilled internal migrants, the issue is mainly about the many practical barriers they face to asserting rights, accessing services and seeking access to justice and compensation if exploited (for example, lack of identity documents, knowledge of labour rights and ability to speak the local language in multilingual countries). It is important to note, therefore, that the extent to which migration can function as a proactive adaptation strategy depends to a significant extent on labour migration governance, as well as attitudes and treatment of migrant workers – whether international or internal. Migration policies focused on harnessing migration as an adaptation tool should, therefore, be equally concerned with internal migration as well as international migration, cyclical and short-term migration as well as long-term migration, and low-skilled as well as skilled migration.

Those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change often lack the ability to migrate and can become trapped populations

The most vulnerable are often the least likely to be able or willing to migrate. Those most vulnerable to climate change are also at the highest risk of becoming trapped when environmental conditions deteriorate. This is particularly the case for subsistence farmers, reliant on rain-fed agriculture, as depleted resources reduce or remove vulnerable people’s capacity to relocate. Low levels of education and limited resources and networks combine to make migration a much less positive prospect, if at all feasible.

“Most Karamojong prefer not to migrate and those who have migrated before didn’t want to do so again because of reasons like segregation, mistreatment from their employees, having no place to sleep, failure to get jobs and make money among others.”

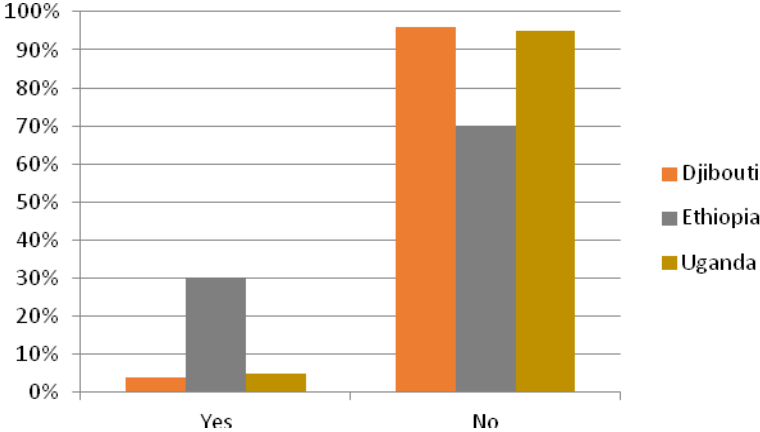
Key stakeholder interview, Karamoja, Uganda, 2021

This finding is in line with the well-established “migrant hump” theory which shows an inverted U-shaped relationship between economic development and emigration levels. This theory shows that international migration is less likely for the poorest segments of society. As a country’s economy grows, so do migration rates, as more potential migrants have the resources enabling them to migrate. Then, once a certain level of prosperity has been reached, migration rates reduce again.

Migrants can also become trapped along the migration route. For poor, unskilled migrants, whether travelling irregularly across borders or internally to the nearest urban centre, the obstacles to finding decent employment are high. The most vulnerable migrants have a higher risk of becoming trapped in transit sites, lacking resources to either move on or return home. **Figure 3** shows that almost all migrants interviewed at transit sites in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Uganda did not have jobs set up before leaving home. Migrants can be trapped in a downward spiral of poverty at their transit or destination site because of a lack of resources, skills and networks, and can face cultural and language barriers and discrimination. Recently arrived migrants in informal settlements are particularly likely to face discrimination and to struggle to overcome these barriers. Furthermore, many of the fastest-growing cities in developing countries, with population growth fuelled by rural–urban migration, are expected

to become adversely affected by climate change, including rise in sea level and extreme weather events.³

Figure 3. Percentage of migrants in transit sites in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Uganda that report having a job set up before leaving their communities of origin.



Data collected as part of the Phase 2 empirical study for the ILO.

In our case study of migrants from the Karamojong minority community in Kampala, migrants interviewed expressed a desire to return home to their communities of origin. However, the majority end up settling in Kampala, often owing to lack of funds or assets to support a return home. The experiences of many Karamojong migrants show how discrimination and lack of access to decent work and social protection are obstacles to the use of migration as a mechanism for strengthening the resilience of migrants and their home communities. Instead, migrants become members of a fast-growing population of vulnerable unemployed or underemployed urban poor.

Adaptation measures and resilience-building in climate hotspots are central to achieving the aim of harnessing planned labour migration as a positive adaptation tool

Resilience-building in climate hotspots is key to adapting to and withstanding climate-related challenges to livelihoods, although long-term investment is required to ensure sustainability. As highlighted above, the impacts of climate change pose a significant and direct threat to the IGAD region. Resilience-building is key to withstanding these impacts, especially in rural areas heavily dependent on rain-fed agriculture and pastoralism. Likewise, businesses need to adapt environmentally sustainable practices and investments to build resilient economies and societies. Without interventions aimed at adapting livelihoods and employment, strengthening the resilience of households and communities in climate hotspots, and advancing sustainable business practices, displacement could become the norm rather than planned labour migration.

Social safety nets in climate hotspots are necessary in the short to medium term, by supporting income and consumption of the poorest households when shocks occur, although building longer-term resilience typically includes complementary programmes to support sustainable livelihood activities

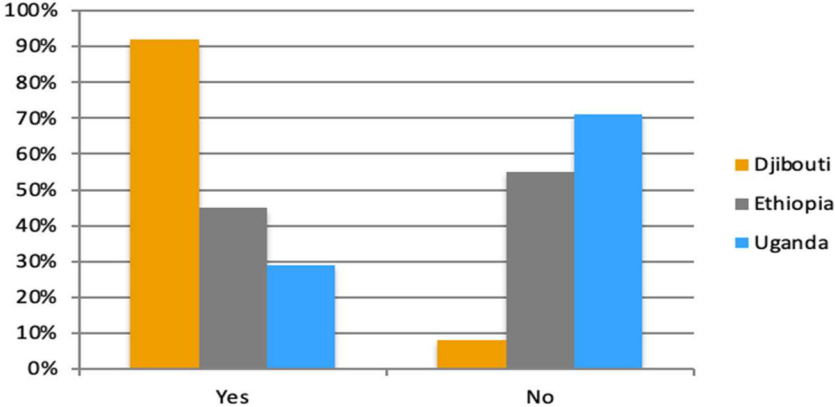
³ IPCC, *IPCC Sixth Assessment Report: Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, 2022. [link](#).

and increased access to health and education services. The empirical study in Djibouti, conducted during Phase 2 of the research, showed that government efforts in cooperation with international partners to support infrastructure and livelihoods development for nomadic communities, including through cash transfers, did have a positive effect, although initial investments had been undermined to some extent by a lack of upkeep and the absence of continued training and investment. For example, almost all community members interviewed from Kourtimalei, an area that had been targeted for such support, mentioned government and development partner support as a key reason for not migrating out of the area despite significant environmental degradation. However, they also flagged the need for continued government support for infrastructure, including schools and further training.

Increased focus on enabling Just Transition has the potential to support job creation and adaptation, but this kind of structural transformation will take time and significant resources. It is, therefore, not a substitute for social protection efforts. Overall, the transition to green growth is expected to create a net increase in jobs globally, but ensuring that the right policies and legal standards are in place to achieve this will be critical. There is growing focus within the IGAD region of the potential for job creation and livelihood opportunities linked to climate adaptation and mitigation. A number of IGAD countries (for example, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda) have demonstrated their commitment to low-carbon green growth and more resilient development pathways through the development of green-growth strategies. Creating green jobs will, however, require large investments in areas such as training, re-skilling and job creation, especially if these opportunities are to reach and include those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. It is also not clear how national level green-growth strategies plan to take into account the role that labour mobility can play in the implementation of these strategies within the IGAD region. This is an area that would benefit from further research.

Remittances from migrants, including internal migrants, can be an important contribution to strengthening resilience in communities of origin. Migrant remittances are most commonly discussed with regard to cross-border migration. However, many internal migrants also send remittances to their families, helping to support adaptation to climate change in source locations (see **figure 4**, which shows the percentage of migrant respondents in destination sites in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Uganda who reported sending money home to their families in communities of origin). Households receiving remittances typically see themselves as more resilient and able to adapt to environmental challenges. In Oromia Zone, Ethiopia, for example, household respondents in our Phase 2 empirical study reported using money received from migrant family members to buy assets and start alternative business activities to diversify their livelihoods. In Karamoja, Uganda, migrant remittances supported households to buy food, meet other basic needs and, in some instances, to diversify their livelihoods. Looking ahead, the diversification of livelihoods could be more proactively linked to green jobs, with more opportunities created for households to access training on green entrepreneurship.

Figure 4. Percentage of migrants in destination sites in Djibouti (Djibouti City), Ethiopia (Addis Ababa) and Uganda (Kampala) who report sending money home to their families.



Data collected as part of the Phase 2 empirical study for ILO.

Adaptation policies within communities of origin could help vulnerable households to better withstand the negative impacts of climate change on their livelihoods, but this will not necessarily lead to less migration and can have unintended consequences. Efforts to strengthen agricultural resilience and promote sustainable land management practices can reduce the pressure to migrate, and would be part of a Just Transition to a more environment-friendly, resilient and fair rural economy. Conflict management or resolution can provide the necessary security conditions to introduce agricultural reform and other mitigatory or adaptive practices. It should, however, be noted that successful adaptation policies within communities of origin could also lead to *increased* migration, as households acquire the resources to plan and facilitate the migration of some or all of its members in order to improve or diversify the household’s income streams. Several recent studies have focused on the potential negative impact that significant migration out of rural areas may have on agricultural production and productivity. For instance, a recent study in Uganda concluded that continued rural out-migration could lead to a brain drain as well as a shortage of agricultural labour, which again could exacerbate declining agricultural productivity. Studies from other African regions have come to similar conclusions on the risks of maladaptation and creating new vulnerability.⁴

Knowledge gaps continue to create obstacles to harnessing labour migration as an adaptation tool. Adaptation strategies to strengthen the benefits of labour migration and reduce the risk of populations trapped in downward spirals of environmental degradation, poverty and immobility cannot be based on a one-size-fits-all approach. Policy responses to promote labour migration as an adaptation tool need to be based on a granular understanding of migration drivers in localities of origin, as well as of the barriers to the successful integration of migrants into labour markets where they settle. Policymakers need to understand under what conditions climate change contributes to migration, how and where migrants move, in which sectors and occupations they are employed, and under what conditions. The launch of IGAD’s first *Migration Statistics Report* in April 2022 is an important milestone in the quest to improve and harmonize statistics on migration in the region, but it does not

⁴ Tumwesigye, S. et al., “Who and why? Understanding rural out-migration in Uganda”, *Geographies*, 1:2, 2021, 104–123, 2021. [link](#). See also Schipper, L. F., “Maladaptation: When adaptation to climate change goes very wrong”, *One Earth*, 3:4, 409–14, 2020. [link](#).

attempt to factor in the diverse roles that climate-related factors have on migration patterns in the region.⁵ It remains the case that there is little robust data available on the number of migrants that move because of the impacts of climate change in the East and Horn of Africa. The report also recognizes that data on labour migration as a whole across the region is scarce.

3.0 Policy gaps and recommendations

Governments and development partners in the IGAD region face three important policy gaps in their quest of harnessing labour migration as an adaptation strategy to climate change. Each gap is briefly outlined below and accompanied by recommendations on how best to fill it.

Policy gap 1. There is limited diagnostic work exploring the role climate change plays in driving migration in different contexts, and this hampers the development of more effective policy responses

The role that climate change plays in driving migration, and the experiences of migrants who leave their communities as a result, is highly complex and context specific. In different communities, climate change will be interacting with other local contextual factors, for instance, pre-existing environmental, economic and demographic challenges, conflict and fragility, in complex and unique ways that will shape the experiences of migrants. It is therefore vital that any effort to respond to the challenges posed by climate change and linked to labour migration begin with detailed and robust research to better understand the local context and to identify the types of interventions that will promote local resilience to the effects of climate change, avoid unintended adverse effects of adaptation measures, and improve development outcomes from climate-related labour migration.

Recommendations on evidence and learning sharing

- **Recommendation 1.** Considering the complexity of migration drivers, and the need for more systematic, but also more granular, evidence on labour migration drivers and trends, IGAD Member States should cooperate on strengthening, aligning and coordinating the gathering and analysis of local-scale (geolocated) data on the environmental impacts (both sudden and slow onset) of climate change and labour migration trends. This will facilitate better diagnosis of labour migration dynamics and climate change science in the IGAD region. International partners such as the ILO and IOM should support this drive towards better data and diagnosis.
- **Recommendation 2.** As part of developing future editions of the *IGAD Migration Statistics Report*, IGAD, ILO and international partners should support efforts to incorporate the environmental impacts of climate change into the report's assessment of the region's migration patterns. A range of efforts is underway to create such frameworks for understanding climate-related drivers of migration, including labour migration, which the IGAD migration statistics report can build on and contribute to strengthening further. For

⁵ IGAD, *IGAD Migration Statistics Report*, 2021. [link](#).

instance, the Climate Change Induced Migration (CLICIM) project, supported by the European Commission, has screened and selected a set of 37 climate change impact indices as potential drivers of migration, and aim to follow this up with a screening exercise for indices for agriculture and water scarcity. These two sets of indices can then be combined with high spatial resolution migration data in statistical models of the link between climate change and migration. While CLICIM's first case study has been in the Sahel region, it has also produced a report taking a spatial demographic approach at high resolution to all of Africa. Its climate change impact indices could be tested in and applied to East and Horn of Africa as part of developing IGAD's statistical reporting.⁶

- **Recommendation 3.** IGAD should encourage and strengthen region-wide mechanisms for Member States to share their experiences on “what works” in supporting cross-border and internal migrants to establish secure and decent livelihoods, for the benefit of themselves and their families back home through remittances. Similar experience-sharing should also be facilitated among employers' and workers' organizations in the IGAD region through their respective confederations – Confederation of IGAD Employers (CIE) and Horn of Africa Trade Unions Confederation (HACTU). The IGAD Ministerial Conference on Labour, Employment and Labour Migration could also serve as an important platform for tripartite exchange of experiences and dialogue on building resilience to climate change. International partners should help facilitate learning sharing.

Policy gap 2. There is a lack of adequate standards protecting all migrants, both those moving across borders and those moving internally, in order to harness labour migration as an adaptation strategy to climate change

The lack of regular migration pathways and limited or no access to social protection undermine the potential of labour migration (whether internal or international) to function as a positive adaptation tool for migrants, their families and their communities of origin. Findings from the literature, as well as from the empirical case studies conducted as part of this research project, highlight significant policy gaps on both *cross-border* and *internal* migration in the IGAD region. The latter is a significant gap, considering that most climate change-related migration in the IGAD region is likely to be internal. Internal migrants, especially if poor and low-skilled, often face discrimination and exploitation. Their experiences can be similar to those of vulnerable cross-border migrants: working long hours in unsafe working environments and with limited or no access to protection mechanisms and representation in trade unions. Implementing IGAD's Protocol on Free Movements of Persons will need national and regional policy instruments that should seek to support or protect both internal and international migrants, in line with the provisions of the protocol.

⁶ Petroliaqkis, T. and A. Alessandrini, *Screening and selecting climate change impact parameters as potential drivers of migration*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2021. [link](#). McMahon, S. et al., *Population exposure and migrations linked to climate change in Africa*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2021. [link](#).

Recommendations on improving protection for migrants

- **Recommendation 4.** Managing international migration out of the IGAD region and cross-border migration within the IGAD region has to go hand in hand with the management of internal migration. Since evidence suggests that internal migration is highly likely to be the most significant migration response to climate change in the region, IGAD Member States should not neglect the urgent task of strengthening labour migration policies that manage and facilitate internal migration from rural climate hotspots to urban hubs. Such policy initiatives need to be informed by labour market needs and developed through active participation of employers and workers organizations.
- **Recommendation 5.** Implementing the IGAD Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons would improve the Member States' ability to collaborate on regulating labour migration and improving standards and protection for all migrants, including international migrants in an irregular situation and internal migrants. IGAD Member States should use implementation of the protocol to drive up protection standards for international and internal migrant workers.
- **Recommendation 6.** In their collaboration to strengthen migration management and implement the protocol, IGAD Member States should include, as a cross-cutting issue, the understanding that the rights and protection of migrants, including their access to services, information, skills development and labour markets, apply equally to internal migrants as they do to international migrants. Otherwise there is a risk that the plight of vulnerable internal labour migrants is neglected as a focus, as international migration dominates the agenda. This includes a focus not only on standards and legislation, but also on addressing practical barriers to accessing services and asserting rights that international and internal migrants can face.
- **Recommendation 7.** IGAD should help Member States to develop policies aimed at improving the safety and welfare of all migrants, particularly to better protect internal and international migrant workers through social dialogue, tripartism and whole of society approach. This could include the following.
 - Ratification and application by IGAD Member States of ILO fundamental conventions, as well as conventions relevant to migrant workers, including Conventions nos. 97, 143 and 181 and relevant conventions on social protection, especially Conventions nos. 102, 118 and 157 to support the principle of equality of opportunity and treatment for migrant workers. These are backed by ILO's [*Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all*](#), its [*Employment and decent work for peace and resilience recommendation*](#), and its [*Guiding principles on access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market*](#).
 - IGAD and its Member States should develop policy instruments and legislation on labour migration based on social dialogue and a whole of society approach.
 - IGAD Member States, supported by international partners, should ensure implementation and effective enforcement policies and compliance with international

standards to enhance the contribution of migrant workers to local development and improved resilience, as a first step to supporting equality of opportunity and treatment.

Policy gap 3. There is a lack of coherence between efforts to strengthen labour migration management and efforts to improve resilience in communities of origin

For many communities impacted by climate change, migration is not a choice and can be a step that many take reluctantly as a last resort. Many migrants, particularly those who are poorer and less educated, do not have the certainty of a job being lined up before they travel. They may also be aware from returning migrants that building new lives elsewhere can be very challenging. Therefore, migrants can struggle to improve their standards of living and can even become trapped in the places they migrate to and be unable to return home because of poverty.

This suggests that new and more effective ways of strengthening the resilience of communities of origin should be developed and supported. Together with stronger migration management and labour market protections, resilience support to communities of origin will also help to ensure that migration is a choice for these communities. This will allow households and communities to use migration as one prong of their strategy to diversify livelihoods and incomes, in turn increasing resilience and helping communities to face the challenges posed by climate change.

While the recommendations below are mainly related to places of origin, they could also be applicable to transit and destination places.

Recommendations on strengthening resilience

- **Recommendation 8.** Social protection and social safety net programmes are important contributors to resilience-building in climate-affected areas. A wealth of experience has been gained from implementing this type of programming in the IGAD region in recent years. IGAD Member States and development partners should work together to identify opportunities for further expanding or replicating successful social protection models in communities most impacted by climate change. For instance, the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) in Ethiopia is a leading example. This work should include cross-learning between Member States and build on existing standards such as ILO's guidance [*Extending social protection to migrant workers, refugees and their families*](#).
- **Recommendation 9.** In their efforts to contribute to resilience-building, policymakers in IGAD Member States should seek to increase community-level access to systems that analyse data and predict risks, to enable communities to better anticipate and prepare for climate shocks. This is likely to require a dual-pronged approach – strengthening the collection and analysis of local level climate data on the one hand, while developing clear and timely messaging and early warning systems on the other.

- **Recommendation 10.** Policymakers in the IGAD region should seek to expand and improve access to education and skills development, including tertiary education, in rural (and often remote) climate-affected areas. This will support households and individuals in communities of origin to diversify their skill sets, including for green jobs or green entrepreneurship, whether to diversify income-generating activities at home or to support their migration journeys and ability to earn a decent wage in areas of transit and/or destination. Training for green jobs and green entrepreneurship could be guided by the ILO's [Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all](#).
- **Recommendation 11.** Green economic growth plans at national and regional levels in the IGAD region should include a focus on those areas and communities most impacted by climate change. Re-skilling communities in the face of a changing world will take time and will not be a painless transition. Planning and funding for this must therefore be pursued with urgency.

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