



PEACE, PROSPERITY AND
REGIONAL INTEGRATION



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

IGAD and IOM Strengthen Relations through Cooperation Agreement

March 25, 2021 (MOMBASA, Kenya): The Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Dr Workneh Gebeyehu, and the Regional Director for East and Horn of Africa of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Mr. Mohammed Abdiker, today signed a Cooperation Agreement as a way to strengthen relations and strategise interventions following a two-day meeting in Mombasa, Kenya.

Within their respective mandates and as outlined in the signed Cooperation Agreement, IGAD and IOM will further cooperate in the areas of:

- Adverse drivers of displacement and irregular migration and durable solutions and sustainable reintegration for displaced persons and returning migrants;
- Assistance and protection to at risk migrants, displaced populations and their communities;
- Health and service delivery to reduce disease-related mortality and morbidity among migrants and mobile populations;
- Facilitating mobility and supporting regional integration;
- Inclusion, social cohesion and conditions that empower mobile populations, migrants and the Diaspora to contribute to sustainable development;
- Reducing the incidence of irregular migration and exposure to related vulnerabilities;
- Promoting whole-of-government structures, coherent policies and normative frameworks underpinning migration; and
- Capacity building, research, statistics, data sharing, access and utilization within and across the IGAD member states

In his remarks, Dr Workneh recalled the 15 years of collaboration since the signature of the first IGAD-IOM Memorandum of Understanding signed in September 2006 and which has since promoted the cooperation and collaboration of the two institutions and delivered significant results. “The fruit of our labour here will be a renewed MoU that is more reflective and responsive to future, emerging and existing dynamics in the displacement and mobility of our people”, the Executive Secretary continued. According to Dr Workneh “migration remains one of the best and most effective adaptation mechanisms” to bounce back from the challenges posed by the covid-19 pandemic which “has been compounded by the effects of the desert locust invasion, widespread flooding and most recently, the flaring up of conflicts and tensions in our region”. In conclusion, he stated that IGAD is committed to strengthen collaboration with IOM to ensure better strategies are developed “to address the current

challenges as well as harness the underlying opportunities that migration provides to the region”.

“IOM will work with IGAD member states to promote prosperity, peace and sustainable development through coherent policies and frameworks at the local and national government levels, on migration to build capacity, research, data sharing. The partnership will also pay special attention to cross cutting issues, like human rights, health, gender and climate and environmental changes that impact migration and migration management in the region”. Mohammed Abdiker, Regional Director East & Horn of Africa, IOM, the International Organization for Migration

The signing of the Cooperation Agreement sets the ground for two days of intensive and comprehensive discussions, between the delegations led by the IGAD Executive Secretary and the IOM regional Director to:

- explore areas of strategic cooperation, operational support, including capacity building, and modes of collaboration between IGAD and IOM,
- agree on areas of expansion of collaboration in response to IGAD Member States’ priorities, regional trends and strategic objectives;
- devise ways and means for enhanced communication and coordination between IGAD and IOM teams as well as creating synergies across different thematic areas covered by both organisations.

The meeting also provides an opportunity to review key achievements and current areas of collaboration between IOM and IGAD, partnerships within the region in terms of good practices and recommend future areas of collaboration in migration management.

Background

Following the accreditation of IOM’s Regional Director for East and Horn of Africa, Mr. Mohammed Abdiker, to IGAD, a meeting took place between the Regional Director and Dr Workneh Gebeyehu, IGAD’s Executive Secretary in November 2020. Subsequent to this, a virtual meeting was held two weeks later between IOM and IGAD colleagues to chart a way forward. Several topics were brought up during this meeting including the new Cooperation Agreement to be signed between the two organisations. In order to further strengthen collaboration between the two organisations, it was agreed that a strategic meeting for IGAD senior management and IOM would be organised, to agree on common areas of work in line with each organisation’s strategy for the East and Horn of Africa region and to establish formal channels of communication between the two organisations through their technical teams.

This meeting is funded by the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Horn of Africa. The EU-IOM Joint Initiative facilitates orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration management through the development of rights-based and development-focused procedures and processes on protection and sustainable reintegration. The project funded under the European Union Trust Fund for Africa covers and has been set up in close cooperation with a total of 26 African countries. The EU-IOM Joint Initiative is aimed at enhancing the relevant stakeholders’ capacity to develop and implement orderly, safe and dignified return and reintegration procedures.

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