



## IGAD - EAC MINISTERIAL DECLARATION ON DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR REFUGEES IN THE EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA.

**Theme:** Enhancing Coordinated Regional Approaches to the Refugee Situation in the East, the Horn of Africa.

### **PREAMBLE:**

**WE**, the Ministers responsible for Refugee Affairs from Member States of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and Partner States of the East African Community (EAC) present here namely: Republic of Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Republic of Djibouti, State of Eritrea, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Republic of Kenya, Republic of Rwanda, Federal Republic of Somalia, Republic of South Sudan, Republic of Sudan and Republic of Uganda;

Convening in Munyonyo, Kampala on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at the IGAD-EAC High Level Ministerial Conference on Durable Solutions on Refugees in the Horn and East Africa;

**IN THE PRESENCE** of the Representatives of Refugees and Representatives of Host Local Governments; H.E Fathia Alwaan, the Representative of the IGAD Executive Secretary, H.E Dr. Irene Isaka, the Representative of the EAC Secretary General, Mr. Michel Nshimba, Representing H.E. Mrs. Minata Samate Cessouma, the African Union Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, H.E Ambassador Yasir Mohammed representing the Executive Secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), Ms. Kokebe Hailegabriel, Representing of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), H.E Susan Namondo Ngongi, the UN Resident Coordinator for Uganda, H.E Ambassador Mohamed Abdi Affey Special Envoy for Horn of Africa at UNHCR, H.E Tejan Sanusi Savage, the IOM Chief of Mission for Uganda, H.E Benjamin Reese, Representative of the World Bank, H.E Alexio Musindo, Regional Director for ILO, H.E John W. Barbian, representing the US Embassy, H.E Ambassador Hidemoto Fukuzawa of the Government of Japan and Co-Convenor of the Global Refugee Forum 2023 Geneva Switzerland.

**AFFIRMING** our continued commitment to our obligations to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol as well as 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of the Refugee Problems in Africa.





Further **COMMITTED** to the operationalisation of the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants adopted by the UN General Assembly on 19 September 2016 (A/RES/71/1) whose intent is to ease pressure on host Member States, enhance refugee resilience, expand access to third-country solutions and support conditions of return on safety and dignity;

Specifically **RECALLING** the landmark Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and reintegration of Returnees in Somalia by the IGAD Heads of State and Government Summit on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2017; which led to thematic declarations namely the IGAD Djibouti Declaration on Refugee Education 2017, IGAD Kampala Declaration on Jobs, Livelihoods and Self Reliance for Refugees, Returnees and Host Communities 2019 and the Mombasa Declaration on Refugee and Cross Border Health Initiatives 2022;

**COGNISANT** of the Treaty Establishing the EAC in Article 124 and Article 7(8) of the EAC Common Market Protocol, which recognises the movement of refugees in accordance with the relevant international conventions;

**NOTING** that the EAC Concluded the EAC Peace and Security Protocol, which obliges Partner States to establish common mechanisms for the management of refugees.

**FURTHER RECOGNISING** that both IGAD and EAC in collaboration with UNHCR, have developed Refugee Management Policies, that are awaiting adoption by their decision-making organs.

**REAFFIRM** commitment of the IGAD and EAC Member States to promote the welfare of Children and Youth, Women, Elderly and People with Disabilities who are particularly vulnerable in situations of forced displacement.

**AWARE** that IGAD and EAC Members states committed to the 2016 ILO “Guiding principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market”;

**ACKNOWLEDGING** that IGAD and EAC Member States are party to the ILO Recommendation 205 on Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience;

**RECOGNIZING** Article 61 and 69 of the 2004 Dar Es Salaam Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region that seek to address the root causes of and find lasting solutions to the protracted problems of displaced and refugee populations as well as ensure that refugees and displaced persons, upon return to their areas of origin, recover their property; and further **RECOGNIZING** the 2019 Munyonyo ICGLR Outcome document of the High Level Meeting of Ministers in charge of Refugees in the Great Lakes Region on the Regional Strategy on Comprehensive Durable Solutions for Refugees.

**WELCOME** UNHCR's achievements in line with the Grand Bargain to transfer 28 per cent of its annual programme expenditure to national and local responders.

**RECOGNIZING** that key problems with refugee management and migration governance in the Region are:

- (i) Cyclical violent conflicts, wars and terrorism in the region is a key source of state fragility, forced displacement, increasing number of Refugees, IDPs and asylum seekers. Currently the region has a humanitarian caseload of 5.5 million Refugees, over 12 million IDPs and millions of mixed migrants including economic migrants, victims of adverse effects of climate change and stateless person;



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(ii) Adverse effects of climate change on communities have created new vulnerabilities from natural disasters including floods, cyclones and landslides which have led to loss of lives and the current severe drought which is affecting over 55 million people in the IGAD Region. Locust invasion of 2021 also exacerbated food insecurity in the Region.

(iii) The protracted displacement situation of refugees which is on average of 17 years demands for more development assistance than humanitarian assistance to displaced persons;

**APPRECIATING** the efforts of IGAD Heads of State Summit of 16 April 2023 and the appointed H.E President Salva Kiir Mayardit to lead the IGAD Presidential Peace Process on ending the conflict in the Republic of Sudan;

**RECOGNIZING** the IGAD High Level Delegation for the Peace Process in the Republic of Sudan, namely the Quartet appointed by the IGAD Heads of State Summit on 12 June 2023 on the speedy resolution of violent conflict in Sudan;

**NOTING** the positive progress made by the Federal Republic of Somalia and the AU African Transitional Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) for pacification of Somalia against Al Shabaab terrorism; and **OFFERING** our deepest condolences to the Republic of Uganda for the loss of ATMIS Peacekeepers in the recent deadly attack in Bulamarer;

And further **OFFERING** our condolences to all families in Africa who have lost their dear ones pursuing asylum and better economic opportunities through the Mediterranean and Red Sea;

**FURTHER NOTING** the efforts of the Mission de l'Organisation des Nations unies pour la stabilisation en République Démocratique du Congo (MONUSCO) and East African Community Regional Force in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (EACRF) in the pacification of Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC);

**COMMENDING** the Parties in Ethiopia, in the African-led and-owned peace process, for signing the Agreement for Lasting Peace Through a Permanent Cessation of Hostilities, in Pretoria, South Africa, on 2 November 2022, which has ended the conflict;

**COMMENDING** the peace efforts in the Republic of South Sudan and **calling** upon the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and All Parties involved to fast track the implementation of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) as elaborated in its implementation Roadmap for lasting peace and security;

**RECALLING** the IGAD-EAC-IOM convened Kampala Declaration on Migration, Environment and Climate change 2022, and citing the key commitments relevant to climate change mitigation and adaptation committing Member States to strengthen regional and national weather and climate institutions capacities and systems to generate accurate, timely data and information on climate change impacts on human mobility.

Further **RECALLING** the engagements taken at the 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP27) on adaptation and on strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to adverse impact of climate change;

And **RECOGNIZING** that refugee settings are often at heightened vulnerability to climate shocks and hazards.

**EXPRESSING** concern over the declining financial resources for humanitarian and development investments, increased pressure exerted on the limited economic resources of asylum countries by existing refugee populations and continued new influx of asylum seekers and;



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**NOTING** that the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and Ukraine-Russian war on economies the capacity of both host Member States and international development partners;

**UNDERSCORING** the scale and scope of forced displacement crises in the East and Horn of Africa Region, which warrants scaling up international solidarity including through new commitments to additional and flexible financial resources to alleviate the pressure on host Member States including cancellation of their debts and increasing their access to grants and related development financing;

**RECOGNIZING** that refugees contribute towards economies in terms of skills, innovation and economic development yet they also put pressure on national socio-economic, environmental and budgetary resources of host Member States;

Further **RECOGNIZING** that durable solutions should be developed through a consultative process that involves multiple stakeholders and ensures the effective and meaningful engagement of refugees.

**ACKNOWLEDGING AND APPRECIATING** that IGAD and EAC Member States have largely upheld a generous open-door policy towards over 5.5 million refugees and asylum-seekers in the Region;

**ACKNOWLEDGING** Uganda's exemplary open-door policy and CRRF whole-of-society approach which recognizes meaningful participation of refugees and host communities, the commitments taken by Democratic Republic of Congo DRC and Republic of Rwanda to re-engage on the voluntary repatriation of refugees from their respective countries in line with existing Tripartite Agreements, with the support of UNHCR. And **FURTHER** acknowledging Burundi's successful voluntary and safe return and reintegration of over 200,000 refugees into their country of origin. Also **RECOGNIZING** the good practice of Djibouti which has initiated issuing refugee ID Cards to refugees to help them attain self-reliance and exercise freedom of movement.

**HAVING** taken stock of the progress and challenges on the implementation of IGAD and EAC Member States 2019 Global Refugee Forum (GRF) pledges to inform preparations for the forthcoming GRF, planned in December 2023, in Geneva, Switzerland;

And further **HAVING** also discussed the need for UN common pledge 2.0 focused on refugees in the region to strengthen the UN's dedication to promoting refugee inclusion in national plans, budgets, datasets, and service delivery systems;

## **WE, THE MINISTERS OF MEMBER STATES OF IGAD AND PARTNER STATES OF THE EAC SOLEMNLY DECLARE:**

### **On addressing the root causes and drivers of forced displacement in IGAD and EAC regions**

#### **On violence and conflicts:**

#### **AGREE TO;**

- (i) Strength national, regional and continental early warning mechanism to anticipate, prevent, contain and manage conflict and crisis situations and facilitate preparedness and early response;
- (ii) Support the operationalization of peace agreements to create political stability with inclusion of refugees and displaced persons in peace processes and prevent new displacements as well as create conditions conducive for voluntary and safe returns;



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- (iii) Review and track progress made in the implementation of peace agreements, security protocols, accords and pacts; and
- (iv) Promote the inclusion of peace education into curricula in all education levels;
- (v) Establish flexible financial mechanisms for displacement crisis and influx of refugees into countries.

### **On natural disasters and adverse effects of climate change:**

#### **AGREE TO:**

- (i) Call upon IGAD and EAC Member States to utilise IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre's (ICPAC) early warnings on risk of displacement from natural disasters to elicit mitigation and early response measures;
- (ii) Develop local level displacement risk profiles in disaster hotspots to broaden the knowledge and evidence base of exposure and vulnerability of communities to support targeted early warning to inform policy and decision making;
- (iii) Put in place anticipatory measures to enhance preparedness and building resilience of most vulnerable communities to climate shocks as well as mechanisms for emergency management;
- (iv) Facilitate cross border movement and protection of persons affected by disasters by developing and implementing Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs);
- (v) Develop comprehensive recovery plans to help populations displaced by disasters to have safe return home and attain increased resilience, sustainable livelihoods, and access to basic services;
- (vi) Work jointly to develop a regional comprehensive adaptation plans of action and partnerships on climate actions to mitigate and adapt to adverse effects of climate change; and
- (vii) Invest in food systems and resilience programs to enhance food security and adequate nutrition for both refugees and host communities.

### **On Protection, maintaining asylum space and rights of refugees as enshrined in international and continental frameworks to be applied in national and regional policy frameworks:**

#### **AGREE TO:**

- (i) Develop, adopt, and implement Comprehensive Regional Refugee Management Policies aimed at ensuring harmonised and coherent standards of protection and solutions within and across the IGAD and EAC Region in line with international protection standards;
- (ii) Maintain an open-door policy permitting the fulfilment of States' international and regional refugee and human rights obligations.
- (iii) Call upon all Member States of the region to uphold the humanitarian character of asylum and the non-political act of granting protection to forcibly displaced persons;
- (iv) Adopt and/or amend national asylum legislation and regulations to permit asylum-seekers to be consistently protected from refoulement, granted access to territory, quality national



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asylum procedures, documentation, and provided effective protection until a durable solution is found;

- (v) Harmonise approaches in addressing onward and pendular movements of refugees and asylum-seekers in the IGAD and EAC Region;
- (vi) Safeguard rights and provide basic services to the growing numbers of urban refugees and create greater investments that are required to support protection and solutions strategies in those areas; and
- (vii) Ensure refugees who are born in host countries, irrespective of their age have access, without discrimination to birth registration and certification, including for late birth registration to advance durable solutions and prevent statelessness including options to be granted citizenship.

### **On Government-led whole-of-society approaches:**

#### **AGREE TO:**

- (i) Undertake relevant government-led legal, policy, institutional and regulatory reforms to facilitate multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral, whole of society approaches in refugee management.
- (ii) Promote experience sharing and benchmarking between and within IGAD and EAC Member States through peer learning.
- (iii) Ensure refugees and host communities participate in governance of refugee response plans and structures.
- (iv) Advance the localization agenda by fostering engagement with local authorities, Civil Society Organizations, Refugee-Led Organizations and increasing direct budgetary support.

### **On socio-economic inclusion:**

#### **AGREE TO;**

- (i) Strengthen the implementation of existing refugee policy and legal framework to address the legal and practical barriers to enabling refugee economic inclusion;
- (ii) Promote equal access to economic opportunities for refugees in the host countries through ensuring rights on freedom of movement, access to financial services from banks and documentation permitting them to engage in employment;
- (iii) Invest in enhancing access to decent work and diverse livelihood opportunities for refugees, returnees and their hosts to foster self-reliance;
- (iv) Facilitate labour mobility within IGAD and EAC Region and avail regional opportunities for refugees through the recognition of certification and prior learning, we call upon
  - a) IGAD Member States to adopt existing IGAD Qualification Frameworks as a foundational measure to enhance self-reliance of refugees, and
  - b) EAC Partner States to implement the East African Qualification Frameworks for higher education to enhance self-reliance of refugees;
- (v) Commit to facilitate free movement of refugees within host countries to enhance social cohesion and equitable access to basic social services across EAC Partner States and IGAD Member States;



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- (vi) Mobilize partners to support Member States of IGAD and EAC to develop and implement programs on employment to provide holistic economic inclusion and social protection services to address refugee's vulnerabilities;
- (vii) Generate quality evidence and data responding to knowledge gaps for programming and policies for economic inclusion and social protection for refugees, other forcibly displaced and stateless people, and host communities;
- (viii) Create an enabling environment for private sector actors to invest in business ventures to enhance livelihoods and job opportunities for refugees and their hosting communities in the IGAD and EAC region;
- (ix) Set-up appropriate infrastructure that attracts private sector investment to increase the market potential for local economic development in refugee hosting areas;
- (x) Recognize that refugees have market relevant skills and qualifications and facilitate linkages to the markets;
- (xi) Commit to facilitate refugees access to digital Identity Documents recognizable by IGAD and EAC Member States to ease refugee labour mobility, market access and job opportunities in the region.

### **On return and reintegration:**

#### **AGREE TO;**

- (i) Create conditions conducive to safe, dignified, and voluntary returns as well as to support sustainable reintegration by investing in peace building processes that enable sustainable peace and security, mitigate and manage insecurity, violence and conflicts;
- (ii) Support the right to restitution or reparation of displaced persons through inclusive land use planning policies that consider the needs of displacement affected communities for settlement, access to land tenure security, and essential services of water, sanitation, healthcare, and education;
- (iii) Undertake institutional capacity building to strengthen land administration and management institutions;
- (iv) Mobilise financial and technical resources from partners to promote sustainable reintegration and self-reliance of returnees;
- (v) Include refugee returnee population in the national development plans, policies and data management systems; and
- (vi) Prepare refugee students by including languages in school curriculum.

### **On resettlement:**

#### **AGREE TO;**

- (i) Advocate for increased access to resettlement and other sponsorship pathways for the admission of refugees and asylum-seekers to third countries as a demonstration of international responsibility-sharing;



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- (ii) Advocate for complementary pathways for the admission of refugees to third countries, including in IGAD and EAC Member States through labour mobility and opportunities for higher education, while maintaining a right of re-admission to host countries;
- (iii) Facilitate access to family reunification procedures, including for unaccompanied and separated children without discrimination of any kind, by facilitating registration to national asylum procedures, family tracing, access to travel documents including exit and entry procedures for departure and admission.

### **On local integration:**

#### **AGREE TO;**

- (i) Promote local integration including by facilitating access to nationality pathways in host countries particularly for those in protracted situations and those who were born in host countries;
- (ii) Inform refugees and provide assistance on alternative legal status in host countries with long term residence and work entitlement.

### **On Partnership, Burden and Responsibility Sharing**

#### **AGREE TO:**

- (i) Call upon the international community to support IGAD and EAC Member States through increased responsibility sharing in refugee responses and emergencies;
- (ii) Assess investments and contributions by IGAD and EAC Member States with a view to demonstrate commitment and identify gaps to be matched by the international community;
- (iii) Assess the environmental impact of hosting refugees to advocate for new and innovative green energy environmental protection standards and programmes;
- (iv) Invest financial and technical resources in environmental rehabilitation and provide alternative energy resources to the refugee hosting areas.
- (v) Invest in historically marginalised refugee hosting areas and focus on the development of human capital, socio-economic infrastructure, livelihoods and environmental rehabilitation for increased resilience;
- (vi) Appeal to national, regional, and international partners to ensure adequate and predictable financing to address unmet humanitarian and development needs;
- (vii) Endorse the joint UN efforts to reinforce refugee protection and inclusion to ensure that no one is left behind in line of the Sustainable Development Goals and noted that over 20 UN entities are joining their forces to create a successor pledge called the UN Common Pledge 2.0 to strengthen the UN's dedication to promoting refugee inclusion in national plans, budgets, datasets, and service delivery systems;
- (viii) Appeal to multi-lateral and bilateral partners as well as other lending institutions and states for debt relief and debt cancellation;
- (ix) Advocate for additional development financing in refugee hosting areas similar to the



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World Bank financed DRDIP grant model and to expand to other IGAD and EAC Member States;

- (x) Appeal that all funding for refugee interventions in all Member States to be given as Grants and not loans.
- (xi) Encourage Member States to leverage on climate financing instruments as agreed at the COP27 to manage climate related or climate-compounded risks; and
- (xii) Commit to provide data for tracking progress of pledges made by countries of origin, host and partners.

### **On humanitarian-development-peace nexus**

#### **AGREE TO:**

- (i) Call upon financing streams by international community that adopt the Humanitarian-development-peace transitional model;
- (ii) Mobilise and allocate budgetary resources to operation and maintenance of transitioned services and infrastructure in refugee hosting areas;
- (iii) Call upon private sector actors to work with IGAD and EAC Member States on investments that facilitate the Humanitarian, Peace and Development Nexus for self-reliance through sustainable Jobs and Livelihoods of refugees and communities that host them.

### **On the joint IGAD-EAC Multi-Stakeholder Regional Durable Solutions Pledge to the Global Refugee Forum 2023:**

#### **AGREE TO;**

- (i) Finalise the adoption of IGAD and EAC Regional Refugee Management Policies, and development of Costed Plans of Actions to ensure harmonised regional approaches that are consistent with international standards, including access to quality asylum procedures, protection and assistance, and durable solutions;
- (ii) Pursue a regional approach on economic inclusion, through investment in climate reform, financial inclusion and private sector investments in refugee hosting and return areas;
- (iii) Develop joint guidelines on the inclusion of the forcibly displaced and stateless populations, in particular women and youth in humanitarian, peace and development processes;
- (iv) Address state fragility, establish and monitor regional peace mechanisms, implement democratic electoral processes, promote regional/bilateral mediation and reconciliation processes and support transitional justice processes in the Region.



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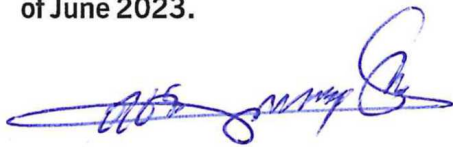
**WE THEREFORE:**


1. **CALL** upon IGAD and EAC Secretariats in collaboration with AU and UNHCR and all partners to re-convene the Experts Session of this High-Level Ministerial Conference in September 2023 in Arusha, Tanzania to develop a Comprehensive Plan of Action for the Implementation of this Ministerial Declaration on Durable Solutions for Refugees in the East and the Horn of Africa;
2. **CALL** upon IGAD Secretariat to convene a Heads of State/Government Summit to Take Stock of the Progress in the Implementation of the Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees in Mogadishu, Federal Republic of Somalia in October 2023;
3. **CALL** upon the international community to commit additional technical and development financing at national and regional level for the implementation of the durable solutions provided for in this Declaration;
4. **Decide** to hold this High-Level Ministerial Session annually and on a rotational basis to track the status of implementation of this Declaration and other decisions on Durable Solutions for Refugees in IGAD-EAC Region.

**FINALLY**, Member States of IGAD and EAC extend deep appreciation to H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni and the Government and People of Uganda for their warm hospitality in hosting the High-Level Ministerial meeting on Durable Solutions for Refugees in the IGAD and EAC Region.


**IN WITNESS WHEREOF, WE**, the Ministers responsible for Refugee Affairs or duly authorized representatives of the Member States of IGAD and Partner States of the EAC have signed this Declaration in two regional texts in English and French languages and all texts being equally authentic.

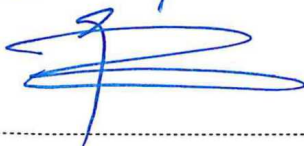
**DONE at the Commonwealth Speke Resort Munyonyo Kampala, Republic of Uganda on this 16th Day of June 2023.**



H.E Hon. Nibona Bonansize Celestin,  
Vice Minister, Ministry of Interior, Community  
Development and Public Security,  
 **Republic of Burundi**



H.E Ahmed Mohamed Madar,  
Executive General, Disaster Management  
 **Republic of Djibouti**




H.E Hon. Binalf Andualem,  
Minister of Peace  
 **Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**



H.E Peter Kazadi Kankonde,  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior  
and Security  
 **Democratic Republic of Congo**



H.E Mohammed Suleiman Ahmed,  
Ambassador of the State of Eritrea to Uganda  


H.E Amb. Maj. Gen. George A. Owinow, CBS (KA Rtd),  
High Commissioner,  
 **Kenya High Commission - Uganda**



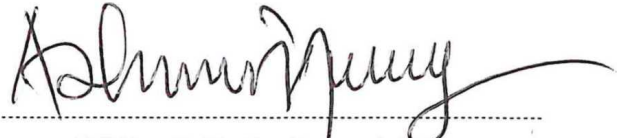

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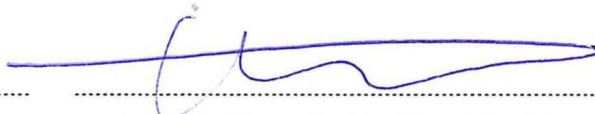
PEACE, PROSPERITY AND  
REGIONAL INTEGRATION





  
H.E Hon. Marie-Solange Kayisire,  
Minister in Charge of Emergency Management  
 **Republic of Rwanda**

  
H.E Hon Abdihakim Hassan Ashkir,  
Deputy Minister, The Ministry of Interior,  
 Federal Affairs & Reconciliation  
**Federal Republic of Somalia**

  
H.E Hon. Albino Akol Atak,  
Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster  
 Management,  
**Republic of South Sudan**


  
H.E Amb, Ahmed Ibrahim Ahmed Awadelseed  
**Ambassador of the Republic of Sudan to**  
 **Uganda**

  
H.E Hon. Engineer Hillary Onek,  
Minister for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and  
Refugees  
 **Republic of Uganda**

**WITNESSED BY:**

  
H.E. Mrs. Minata Samate Cessouma,  
Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs  
and Social Development  
**African Union Commission (AUC)**

  
H.E Ambassador Yasir Mohammed,  
Deputy Executive Secretary  
**International Conference on the Great Lakes  
Region (ICGLR)**

  
H.E Fathia Alwan,  
Director, Health and Social Development  
Division  
**The Intergovernmental Authority on Development  
(IGAD)**

  
H.E Dr Irene Isaka,  
Director Social Sectors  
**The East African Community (EAC)**



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