



Ethiopian migrants crossing the country's national border. © International Bar Association, 2023.

## Addressing human mobility in the context of climate change, disasters, and environmental degradation: Developments in Ethiopia's national and regional policy and legal frameworks

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### Introduction

Climate change contributes to more intense and disruptive extreme weather events, such as prolonged droughts and heavy rains or flooding, around the world. The impacts of these extremes vary regionally and locally, compounding existing livelihood insecurities which affect human mobility<sup>1</sup> patterns. Moreover, there

is an increasing concern that tensions may arise in communities of migrant origin or destination when climate hazards collide with fragile livelihoods, particularly where resources are scarce. With wetter, cooler highlands and hotter, drier lowlands, the effects of climate change in Ethiopia, particularly on agriculture-based livelihoods, are complex. Applying a very likely level of confidence (90-100%), the projected

increase in air temperatures in the country ranges from +0.9–1.1 °C by 2030, +1.7–2.1 °C by 2050, and +2.7–3.4 °C by 2080, relative to pre-industrial levels and depending on how effectively greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations are contained globally (PIK, 2022). Increased rainfall and severe droughts are already stressing fragile ecosystems, resulting in more frequent water shortages, crop failure, livestock deaths, and, ultimately, contributing to (forced) internal population movements.

Current research concludes that the evidence for a causal link between extreme weather events motivating human mobility in East Africa and anthropogenic climate change is ‘unfit’ (Thalheimer et al. 2021:9). Multifarious factors - including social, political, economic, demographic, and environmental drivers - add to reshaping human mobility patterns in the context of climate change, disasters, and environmental degradation in Ethiopia. In this context, climatic change and its effects act as a risk multiplier. For instance, reduced rainfall during the traditional rainy season in 2019 led to drought conditions that affected the Southern and Southeastern parts of the country. Such conditions impacted agro-pastoral communities, driving down crop yields, reducing fodder for livestock, and contributing to population movements in these regions (Webster et al., 2020: 24).

Whereas drought is an issue in parts of the country, heavier-than-usual rainfall can also result in significant flooding, for example, in the low-lying parts of the country. In this context, IOM estimated that approximately 200,000 individuals were internally displaced in October 2019 due to flood incidences in Afar, Oromia, Somali, and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ Region (SNNPR). In total, over 4,5 million people in Ethiopia were living in displacement as of April 2022 (see Figure 1). Even though the distinct dimensions of human mobility in the context of climate change, disasters, and environmental degradation have been typical, since November 2020, the Northern Ethiopia Crisis has been the primary driver for displacement at the national level (ibid.: 24).<sup>2</sup> More importantly, displacement is accompanied by other forms of mobility driven by environmental changes. Among others, these include rural-to-urban migration, international labour migration, as well as planned relocation processes.

This briefing paper explores the ways in which the interplay amongst climate change, disasters, environmental degradation, and human mobility is

reflected in Ethiopia’s current policy and legal frameworks. It aims to identify strategies for the improved management of population movements at the national level. Besides offering a concise summary of how the impacts of climate change, disasters, and environmental degradation affect mobility patterns in the country, the document (i) investigates the extent to which existing national policies and legal instruments, including those from regional organisations of which Ethiopia is a member; and (ii) provides concluding remarks.

### Note on methods

To explore the extent to which Ethiopia has integrated considerations about the distinct dimensions of human mobility in the context of climate change, disaster, and environmental degradation into its national agenda, this analysis builds upon a systematic review of national policy and legal frameworks that address migration, climate and other environmental changes, and disaster risk reduction (DRR). These documents were scrutinised using a pragmatic approach, with assumptions emerging from the combination of different terms. Upon identifying expressions pertinent to the topic, the content was further examined to provide a comprehensive background and a detailed understanding of the context at hand. This same method was applied to the policy and legal instruments enacted by the regional organisations to which Ethiopia is affiliated.

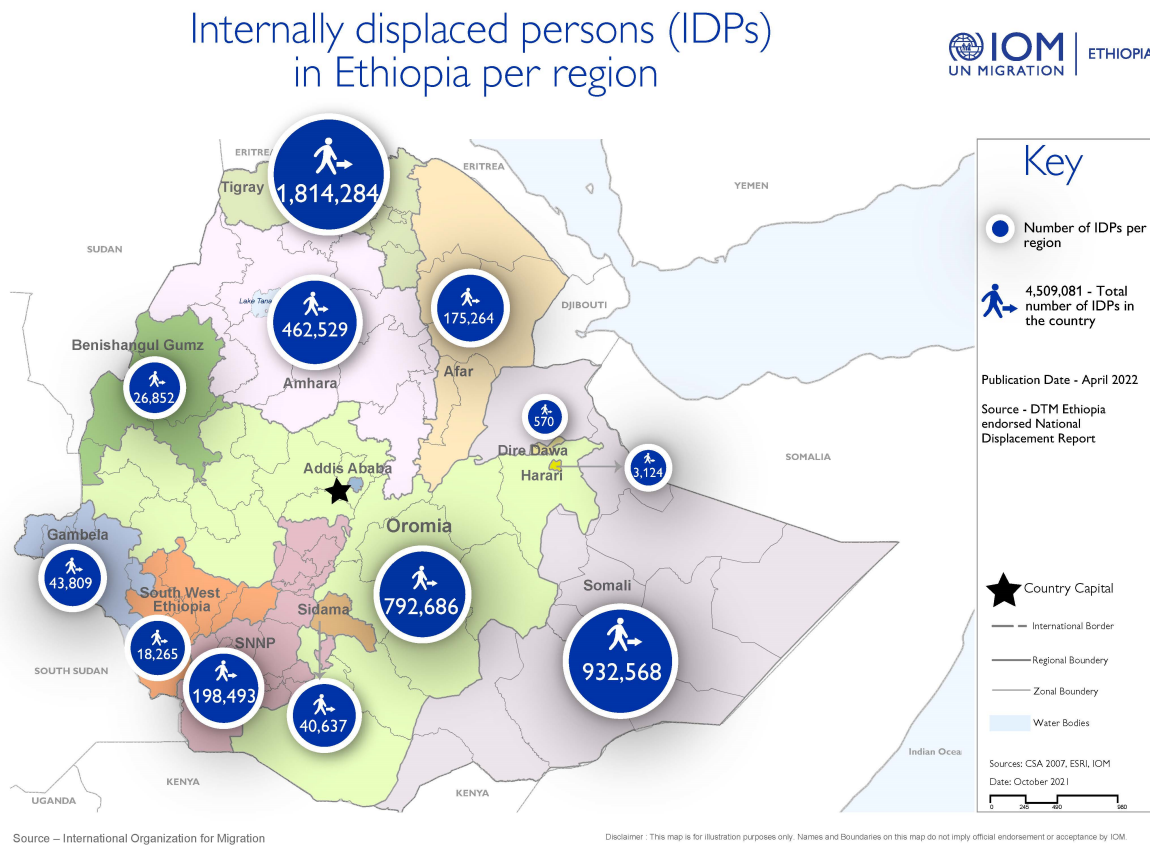
### The distinct dimensions of human mobility in the context of climate change, disasters, and environmental degradation in existing national policy and legal frameworks

In addition to exploring migration governance at the national level, this section investigates legal instruments related to climate and other environmental changes, as well as DRR in Ethiopia. This is to ascertain the extent to which they address the distinct dimensions of human mobility in the context of climate change, disasters, and environmental degradation. Amongst the 34 policies and legislations that have been identified in Ethiopia, only 10 acknowledge and/or make provisions regarding this topic (see Annex 1).

### Migration policies and legislation

All issues related to migration in Ethiopia are governed by two main legislations: the Immigration Proclamation

Figure 1. Displacement in Ethiopia, April 2022



(No. 354/2003), which outlines the requirements for entry into or departure from the country, as well as related regulations (FDRE, 2003a); and the Proclamation on Ethiopian Nationality (No. 378/2003), which provides a path towards permanent residence permit and Ethiopian nationality for foreigners residing in the country (FDRE, 2003b). The country is also equipped with a Diaspora Policy aimed at attracting members of the diaspora to participate in the economic development of the country, as well as to facilitate a conducive environment in the ongoing peace and democratisation-building process at the national level (FDRE, 2012). Furthermore, Proclamation No. 909/2015 calls for the design of a legal system capable of alleviating human trafficking and smuggling of migrants within national borders (FDRE, 2015a). None of the identified national legislation on migration makes references to or provides for the regulation of those who move in the context of climate and disaster impacts.

Regarding issues related to refugee status, the national Government acknowledged that the Refugees Proclamation (No. 409/2004) did not reflect the current developments made in international refugee protection.

Consequently, a new Refugees Proclamation (No. 110/2019) was enacted to promote comprehensive protection and assistance to refugees in Ethiopia (FDRE, 2004 & 2019a). Although the 2019 Proclamation underlines that recognised refugees and asylum-seekers shall have the duty to protect the environment, the policy document does not address the distinct dimensions of human mobility in the context of climate change, disasters, and environmental degradation.

### Climate and environmental change policies and legislation

The national Government of Ethiopia has developed policies to proactively address the threats and impacts of climate and other environmental changes in the country. Attention has been given to the nexus between climate change, disasters, environmental degradation, and human mobility. Out of the seven climate- and environment-related policy documents examined for this study,<sup>3</sup> four address the topic:

1. The Environmental Policy (1997) aims to achieve sustainable development through the management of environmental resources. To this end, a set of sectoral



policies and strategies are to be implemented and, amongst these, there is a focus on incorporating rural-urban migration, human settlements, and environmental health concerns that arise from urbanisation processes (FDRE, 1997).

2. The Climate-Resilient Green Economy Strategy (2011) proposes adaptation initiatives to reduce the population's vulnerability to the effects of climate change. The Strategy highlights the increase in urban population driven by population growth and intensified rural-urban migration. It also points out that the expansion of power generation capacity at the national level may lead to adverse socio-environmental impacts, including displacement. However, the Strategy does not put forward effective measures to manage population movements in such contexts (FDRE, 2011).

3. The Climate Resilient Green Economy National Adaptation Plan (2019) introduces distinct adaptation strategies to be adopted by sectors vulnerable to climate change. Besides acknowledging that migration increases the vulnerability of rural communities to climate and disaster risks, the Plan underlines that droughts and flooding intensify the migration of rural dwellers to towns – adding pressure on already precarious urban structures and social services (FDRE, 2019b). The Plan also highlights seasonal labour migration as a short-term coping mechanism employed by local communities in response to climate hazards (Ibid.: 21). Importantly, it proposes adaptation alternatives, including social protection and livelihood options for vulnerable individuals. These include facilitating voluntary resettlement or migration when livelihood diversification and access to credit are unfeasible (Ibid.: 27). The implementation of this Plan was contingent upon the formulation of a Roadmap, released in the following year, which identified key activities to realise the Plan's adaptation strategies (FDRE, 2020). In addition to emphasising that climate risks exacerbate displacement, especially in drought-prone areas, the Implementation Roadmap mentions initiatives supported by non-state actors that aid in relocating communities from high to low climatic risk areas (Ibid.: 46). Furthermore, to enhance the resilience of urban systems, the Roadmap aims to establish social structures that support individuals relocating to urban areas, thereby minimising stress and risk-taking behaviours often exacerbated by disaster situations and displacements (Ibid.: 70).

4. The Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC, 2015) and other policy documents submitted to

the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat do not refer to the distinct dimensions of human mobility. Nevertheless, the updated NDC attests that climate variability is already affecting almost all sectors, exacerbating conflict over scarce resources and influencing mobility patterns (FDRE, 2015b & 2021).

Considering the low contribution and high vulnerability of Ethiopia to climate change, the authors infer that the national Government has consistently emphasised adaptation and mitigation measures as central components of its climate response. The domestic climate agenda acknowledges the impacts of climate change on mobility patterns in existing policy documents and gradually incorporates generic measures to avert the phenomenon.

### Disaster management policies and legislation

Ethiopia has progressively improved its ability to address disaster risks and impacts. Three (out of six) DRR policy and legal instruments identified in this study recognise and/or present specific measures to address human mobility as a result of disasters:

1. The National Policy and Strategy on Disaster Management (NPSDM), established in 2013, aims to reduce risks and potential damages caused by disasters through a comprehensive and coordinated disaster risk management system (FDRE, 2013). Comprising ten directives, the NPSDM recommends the establishment of (i) a disaster risk management system, (ii) early warning systems, (iii) mechanisms for resource mobilisation, and (iv) information and communication systems (Ibid.). Along with recognising the vulnerability caused by climate impacts and risks, the NPSDM makes generic references to the need to evacuate people at risk during the disaster phase. Nonetheless, concrete measures to address the risk of displacement occurring, as well as the risk of people remaining displaced, are not proposed.<sup>4</sup>

2. The Disaster Risk Management Strategic Programme and Investment Framework was put in place in 2014 to operationalise the NPSDM. The Programme offers a strategic framework for prioritising and planning investments that will enhance Ethiopia's disaster risk management system (FDRE, 2014). Interventions related to the immediate relief and long-term recovery of displaced populations include return, resettlement, and reintegration support (Ibid.). Supporting these durable solutions should integrate complementary



humanitarian and development activities.

3. The Humanitarian and Disaster Resilience Plan (HDRP, 2018) represents the initial step towards the development of a multi-year planning framework. Its objectives are to (i) enhance the quality and delivery of humanitarian responses, (ii) mitigate future needs in areas prone to recurrent climate impacts, (iii) support the strengthening of national service provision to address needs arising from climate- and disaster-related impacts, and (iv) promote the recovery of communities affected by drought and conflicts (FDRE, 2018). The Plan outlines three strategic objectives for addressing humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia: (i) saving lives and reducing morbidity due to drought and food insecurity, (ii) protecting and restoring livelihoods, and (iii) preparing for and responding to distinct humanitarian shocks, including disaster and conflict displacements (Ibid.: 11).

The HDRP serves as Ethiopia's most comprehensive tool for addressing climate, disaster, and conflict-related displacement. It explicitly encourages the implementation of national measures to tackle these challenges. The Plan promotes the establishment of actions that enable (i) voluntary return to areas of origin, (ii) integration with host communities, and (iii) resettlement to selected areas. While individuals who were displaced and remain close to their origin areas will be supported to voluntarily return to their habitual place of residence, others will be provided with alternative areas for integration or resettlement (Ibid.). The Plan also envisions providing immediate life-saving assistance to displaced households in situations where emergency shelters are needed. In the longer term, it aims to strengthen disaster risk mitigation, safe building practices, as well as rehabilitation and recovery efforts for disaster-affected households, including those who have been displaced (Ibid.).

More importantly, the HDRP has a specific focus on vulnerable groups, including women, children, older persons, and individuals with disabilities, in situations of disaster displacement. The limited access to services in the aftermath of disasters heightens their vulnerability to distinct protection risks. Emergency assistance structures are to be established to ensure that individuals with special needs and those without appropriate care receive emergency protection services (Ibid.).

In summary, the specific protection needs of people internally displaced in the context of conflicts and disasters are not only identified but also sought to be recognised by the national Government through the HDRP. u

the humanitarian response. Furthermore, the Plan initiates the process of linking this response to longer-term resilience-building and development efforts.

## Regional and continental perspectives on the evolving linkages between human mobility, climate change, disasters, and environmental degradation

In addition to national policies and legislations addressing human mobility in the context of climate change, disasters, and environmental degradation in Ethiopia, this briefing paper also takes into account policy instruments issued by regional organisations to which the country is a member State. Provisions established at the regional level can complement the implementation of national instruments. The provisions of the following regional organisations were investigated: (i) African Economic Community (AEC), (ii) African Union (AU), (iii) Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and (iv) Intergovernmental Authority on Development in Eastern Africa (IGAD).

### The African Union (AU)

The AU has been instrumental in the development of important policy instruments linked to the nexus between human mobility, climate change, disasters, and environmental degradation:

1. The Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (OAU Convention, 1969) defines refugees to include persons who are fleeing "events seriously disturbing public order" (OAU, 1969). While the definition can be interpreted to encompass persons fleeing climate-induced events, it still requires further clarification by the treaty monitoring body. Recognising and protecting the rights of those on the move in such contexts have always been and continue to be subject to political, economic, and legal contestations.<sup>5</sup>

2. The Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa (2010) aims to safeguard pastoralists' rights through the establishment of specific strategies (AU, 2010).<sup>6</sup> Regarding pastoralists' mobility, the document acknowledges that migration is not only the basis for the efficient use and protection of rangelands but also a key aspect for appropriate adaptation to climate risks and impacts (Ibid.). Given that pastoralist mobility often requires movements through settled farming areas, across internal administrative borders within countries, and across national borders, the Framework

recommends the development of specific measures that facilitate pastoralists' distinct forms of mobility. This requires a better understanding of the aspects surrounding pastoralists' movements, as well as the dialogue and involvement of non-pastoral actors (Ibid.).

3. The AU Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention, 2012) is the first regional instrument to explicitly address displacement due to disasters and the effects of climate change. The Convention has been widely ratified in Africa, including by Ethiopia in 2020, and is legally binding across the region. While the Kampala Convention facilitates the regulation of displacement in the context of climate change and disaster at the national level, it only applies to persons who have not crossed a national border<sup>7</sup> and therefore does not govern transboundary population movements prompted by conflict, disasters, or other effects of climate change.

4. The 2015 AU Humanitarian Policy Framework provides a broad intent of the AU to assist displaced populations due to conflicts and disasters. Its goals include: (i) supporting member States in assisting displaced populations; (ii) strengthening institutional framework and capacity for the protection and assistance of displaced populations; (iii) fostering collaboration among member States, international organisations, and humanitarian agencies; (iv) promoting the adoption of national measures to assist displaced populations; and (v) encouraging the sharing of information on the situation of displaced persons in Africa (AU, 2015). The Framework aims to establish guidelines for coordinating and supporting the AU's involvement in early warning and prevention efforts, addressing root causes, and ensuring adequate preparation to respond to the humanitarian challenges arising from conflicts and climate-related disasters (Ibid.). However, the effective implementation of the Framework still relies on the development of an implementation plan.

5. The AU Migration Policy Framework and Action Plan (2018) aligns with international migration management policies and standards at the regional level. This document offers policy guidance to member States, assisting in the formulation and implementation of their national policies (AU, 2018). Recognising that environmental factors contribute to mobility and exacerbate environmental degradation in destination areas, the Action Plan calls for the incorporation of environmental considerations in migration policies, amongst others (see Box 1).

### Box 1. Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018-2030): Recommended strategies to deal with migration and environment

**Incorporate environmental considerations:** National migration policies should include environmental factors to address the causes and impacts of migration related to the environment.

**Establish in-country processes:** Create resettlement and humanitarian visa programmes to assist those affected by environmental factors.

**Counter environmental degradation:** Address the negative impact of displaced populations on ecosystems through regular reviews and remedial actions.

**Collaborate with international agencies:** Work with relevant international organisations to improve research, data collection, and information dissemination on migration and the environment.

**Strengthen intra-regional cooperation:** Develop regional contingency plans and enhance cooperation among neighbouring countries to respond effectively to mass migration situations.

**Implement a common African position on climate change:** Integrate climate change considerations into a unified African approach to addressing migration and its environmental aspects.

Source: AU, 2018.

6. The recently launched African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032) has taken an important step forward by recognising the role of migration as an adaptation strategy, emphasising the responsibility of governments in normalising and facilitating such processes. One of the priority intervention areas outlined in the strategy focuses on strengthening the capacity of vulnerable communities to actively engage in national climate policy processes. The suggested action, to identify and train vulnerable communities such as farmers, coastal fishing communities, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in national climate policy planning, agenda setting, monitoring, and implementation, underscores the commitment to involving those most affected by climate change in shaping the policies that impact their lives (AU, 2022).

### The African Economic Community (AEC)

The 2018 AEC Free Movement Protocol<sup>8</sup> enshrines the principles of free movement, the right of residence, and the right of establishment in Africa. Article 24 of the

Protocol governs the procedures for the movement of specific groups, stipulating that member States may establish particular procedures for the mobility of specific vulnerable groups, including refugees, victims of human trafficking and smuggled migrants, asylum seekers, and pastoralists (AEC, 2018). It is worth noting that this Protocol has not yet come into effect, and although it does not explicitly acknowledge the distinct dimensions of human mobility in the context of climate change, disasters, and environmental degradation, this provision could be applicable in such contexts.<sup>9</sup>

### The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)

Established in 1994, the COMESA aims to promote regional integration through trade and the development of natural and human resources. In 1998, the Common Market approved its Free Movement Protocol,<sup>10</sup> which outlines visa requirements, refusal of entry, (temporary) expulsion, right of residence, free movement of labour and services, among others provisions (COMESA, 1998). The existing free movement arrangement provides the potential or basis for the admission of persons from other member States who may be moving or seeking entry into Ethiopia as a result of climate change impacts and related disasters.

### The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa

With regard to its migration agenda, the IGAD Regional Migration Policy Framework was released in 2012. It provides an overview of migration challenges at the regional level, covering internal, irregular and labour migration, border management, displacement, migration data, among other aspects. The main goal of this Policy Framework is to harmonise migration policies among member States (IGAD, 2012). It includes a specific section on “migration, climate change, environment, and adaptation”, emphasising the need for well-formulated policies and strategies related to environmental-induced migration (see Box 2), as well as the importance of implementing humanitarian resettlements in the case of forced migration (Ibid.).

In addition, IGAD’s Protocol on Free Movement of Persons recognises the contributions that the free movement of people can have in mitigating the impacts of conflicts and disasters. It underlines climate change and environmental degradation as important drivers of displacement and migration in the region (IGAD, 2020a). Disaster displacement is regulated by Article 16

of the Protocol, which stipulates that citizens from member States who move in anticipation of, during, or in the aftermath of a disaster are allowed to enter the territory of any member State. The provision determines that member States shall take measures to facilitate the extension of stay or the exercise of other rights by citizens of other member States who are affected by disaster when returning to their country of origin is not possible or reasonable (Ibid.). IGAD’s 2020 Protocol on Transhumance is also to be noted, as it aims to foster the social and economic potential of the pastoral system by enabling free, safe, and orderly cross-border mobility of transhumant livestock and herders as a climate adaptation mechanism (IGAD, 2020b). In this regard, the Protocol recommends the harmonisation of national policies related to pastoralist development, land use and governance, as well as cross-border mobility measures (Ibid.). Importantly, both Protocols are still to be implemented.

More recently, IGAD member States signed the Kampala Declaration on Migration, Environment, and Climate Change. This endorses the notion that climate impacts further affect African populations and livestock and calls for enhanced cooperation to address (i) human mobility patterns associated with desertification and land degradation, (ii) rural-urban migration processes as a result of climate change and disasters, (iii) the lack of reliable data on the topic in the region, as well as (iv) funding challenges related to the topic (IGAD, 2022d).

With IGAD’s climate agenda, the Regional Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2023-2030) outline strategic interventions on climate adaptation and mitigation, categorised into four main areas: (i) implementing climate strategies and actions, including coordination, capacity-building, and resource mobilisation; (ii) integrating climate strategies and actions into key economic sectors; (iii) enhancing regional capacity in climate-related knowledge generation; and (iv) promoting mitigation and low carbon development (IGAD, 2022b). Key Priority Area 9 focuses on displacement among member States: Reduced resource availability due to regional climate change effects fuels resource competition, escalating instability, displacement, and migration processes, exacerbating existing conflicts and regional security (Ibid.). Recognising that climate adaptation can enhance human security in the region, the Action Plan seeks to address the impacts of climate-induced conflict and displacement through specific strategic interventions. These include: (i) assessments of the



interaction between climate change-induced vulnerabilities and conflicts over scarce resources, (ii) management of humanitarian interventions resulting from conflicts or disasters, (iii) harmonisation of regional immigration policies to reduce vulnerability to climate events, and (iv) development of regional guidelines for emergency evacuation plans (Ibid.).

As part of its work agenda, IGAD has also addressed DRR. The IGAD Disaster Risk Management Programme, launched in 2004, has contributed to DRR in the region by developing regional and national disaster preparedness and response capacity. Among others initiatives, it supports the development of policy and legal frameworks related to this topic and strengthens regional cooperation (IGAD, 2022c). In turn, IGAD's Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI) Strategy for the period 2013-2017 addressed the effects of drought and related shocks in the region in a sustainable manner. In summary, the IDDRSI recognises the need for a comprehensive approach to combating food insecurity, poverty, and environmental degradation to enhance communities' resilience to drought-related impacts. The Strategy includes references to the distinct dimensions of human mobility. It highlights that prolonged droughts have led to waves of "climate refugees" and often resulted in conflicts between communities within and across national borders. It also emphasises that rural-urban migration depletes the productive workforce in rural areas and exacerbates socio-economic challenges in cities due to informal settlements (Ibid.). Specifically, the document refers to the "restrictive mobility of people" as a factor undermining the resilience of pastoral and agro-pastoral systems. While acknowledging the lack of appropriate policy instruments governing population movements in the context of environmental degradation, the Strategy aims to harness the development potential of safe, orderly, and regular mobility patterns, promoting the notion of migration as an adaptation strategy to cope with climate- and disaster-related movements (Ibid.). The IDDRSI Strategy for the period 2019-2024 reiterates these facts without presenting further developments in terms of proposing effective measures to address the phenomenon (IGAD, 2019).

## Conclusions

Today, Ethiopia is experiencing enhanced or otherwise altered population movements in the context of climate change, disasters, and environmental degradation. References to the topic in the national policy and legal frameworks examined indicate a slow

### Box 2. IGAD Regional Migration Policy Framework: Recommended strategies to cope with migration, climate change, environment and adaptation

**Formulate national migration management policies:** Develop specific national migration policies aimed at preserving and enhancing the environment.

**Engage with international organisations and authorities:** Collaborate with international organisations and national authorities to offer technical and financial support, particularly in areas where environmental factors drive migration or attract migrants and displaced individuals.

**Data management:** Establish mechanisms for collecting, managing, and sharing migration and environmental data among member states to facilitate the exchange of relevant information and identify long-term solutions.

**Monitor displaced persons' behaviour:** Continuously monitor the actions of displaced individuals within host communities to identify potential challenges and opportunities for shaping appropriate policies and programmes.

**Promote environmental sustainability through adaptation:** Encourage the adoption of adaptation strategies that promote environmental sustainability, considering the impact of climate change and migration.

**Integrate migration into climate adaptation strategies:** Promote the development and implementation of strategies that incorporate migration into regional climate adaptation plans.

Source: IGAD, 2012.

– albeit progressive – acknowledgment of the effects of changing circumstances on vulnerable communities, including with respect to the distinct dimensions of human mobility. While this recognition is evident in some of the instruments discussed above, gaps remain.

At the national level, none of the identified national legislation on migration makes references to or provides for the regulation for those who move as a result of the impacts of climate change, disasters, and environmental degradation. Therefore, the development of a comprehensive migration policy, which is currently in discussion, would serve a dual purpose. It would facilitate strategic thinking regarding the benefits of migration, harnessing its developmental potential in the country. Additionally, it would enable the inclusion of considerations and effective measures to address the distinct dimensions of human mobility linked to climate change, disasters, and environmental degradation.

The domestic climate agenda has progressively recognised the impacts of climate, disasters, and other environmental changes on mobility patterns. It has gradually incorporated general provisions into existing policy documents. The emphasis has primarily been on adaptation measures, aimed at preventing the phenomena. However, national climate policy documents draw attention to rural-urban processes resulting from prolonged droughts. They thus endorse labour migration as a short-term mechanism in response to climatic impacts. Also, the creation of social structures for individuals arriving in cities would enhance the resilience of urban systems to such (forced) population movements.

It is crucial that national climate strategies address pre-existing vulnerabilities and the intricate linkages between human mobility, climate change, disasters, and environmental degradation. Maladaptive approaches aimed at mitigating the impacts of climate change and disasters in rural regions could trigger further migration patterns, while failing to support “trapped” populations who have suffered significant losses of ecosystem services can result in socio-economic and security consequences. Therefore, considering these factors, this domestic agenda should develop a comprehensive set of policies and instruments or enhance existing ones. These should (i) recognise, protect, and assist people affected by the impacts of climate change, disasters, and environmental degradation; (ii) promote ecosystem-based approaches to climate risk management; and (iii) create livelihood opportunities that prevent (forced) population movements in such circumstances.

On a different note, the national DRR agenda appears to be the most advanced policy sphere in Ethiopia when it comes to addressing mobility patterns. Domestic DRR policies and legal instruments provide opportunities for the effective implementation of measures to address displacement in the context of disasters. For instance, the 2014 Disaster Risk Management Programme and Investment Framework aims to facilitate return, resettlement, and reintegration support as part of its initiatives related to immediate disaster relief and long-term recovery. Similarly, the 2018 Humanitarian and Disaster Resilience Plan focuses on promoting the recovery of communities affected by conflicts and disasters, including humanitarian actions to address displacement.

Still, it is notable that there is limited alignment with the provisions established under new layers of international governance dealing with the distinct dimensions of human mobility in the context of climate change,

disasters, and environmental degradation (e.g. the recommendations provided by the UNFCCC’s Task Force on Displacement, the objectives presented by the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, as well as targets proposed by the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction). This is because national policy and legal instruments identified in this study were passed before the adoption of such global agendas. Moreover, our examination of the national-level provisions also reveals weak communication between the Ethiopian migration, climate, and DRR agendas, compromising the efficiency of their initiatives related to the topic. The articulation of distinct legal spheres – which are not advancing in a synchronized manner – must be improved, thus better supporting the effective inclusion and operationalization of the distinct dimensions of mobility and protection of people on the move in these contexts. In this context, enhanced policy monitoring would guide decision-making and new legislative processes. As a foundation for these the development of evidence-based policies, enhanced data collection methodologies, and improved technical capacities are needed to bridge knowledge gaps on both internal and transnational population movements, as well as on sudden- and slow-onset processes.

Finally, national responses can be enabled by the effective implementation of existing regional governance arrangements. Policy and legal instruments presented by regional organizations entail opportunities to incorporate strategies at the national level aimed at enhancing the management of distinct dimensions of human mobility that result from the impacts of climate change, disasters, and environmental degradation. Guidance on the incorporation of the topic in the formulation of national policies has been provided not only by the African Union (through the Humanitarian Policy Framework, the Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action, as well as the Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan) but also by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in Eastern Africa (through the IGAD Regional Migration Policy Framework). In the meantime, while not yet implemented, existing regional free movement agreements present the potential basis for the admission of persons who may be moving or seeking to enter Ethiopia as a result of climate change, environmental degradation or related disasters.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> The term *human mobility* in the context of climate change, disasters, and environmental degradation is considered an umbrella concept that refers to all aspects of the movement of people. Human mobility is understood to encompass involuntary internal and cross-border displacement of populations, voluntary internal and cross-border migration and planned and consented relocation.

<sup>2</sup> Since November 2020, Ethiopia's region of Tigray is at the centre of an ongoing civil conflict involving ethno-regional militias, the national government and the Eritrean military. The conflict has left Tigray with limited humanitarian assistance and has hindered the delivery of essential supplies to the local population.

<sup>3</sup> The analysis of national environmental policies was not exhaustive: It included only those policies that could be related to topic, leaving aside policy documents that address the energy sector, for instance.

<sup>4</sup> The NPSDM defines displacement as "the process of people being forced to move from their homes to other places because of a natural hazard, war/conflict, or other human-made action".

<sup>5</sup> An exception is, for instance, the 2010 UNHCR Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-seekers from Somalia. The document acknowledges that Somali displacement "due to human rights violations, conflict, natural disasters and economic crises have been commonplace" since the collapse of the Somali State in the early 1990s. The document states that Somalis may, depending on the circumstances surrounding flight, qualify as refugees within the meaning of the Refugee Convention definition, encouraging a group-based approach (Weerasinghe, 2018).

<sup>6</sup> These include: (i) the recognition of the role of pastoralism in development, (ii) demonstrating commitment to pastoral policy development, (iii) integrating pastoral issues into decision-making processes, (iv) acknowledging the legitimacy of indigenous pastoral institutions, (v) strengthening the role and rights of women in pastoral communities, (vi) mainstreaming pastoral issues in poverty reduction programmes, among others (AU, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> According to the Convention, "internally displaced persons" refers to individuals who have been forced to leave their places of habitual residence as a result of armed conflicts, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, as well as natural or man-made disasters (AU, 2012).

<sup>8</sup> Entitled "Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment".

<sup>9</sup> For further information, see "The Role of Free Movement of Persons Agreements in Addressing Disaster Displacement: A Study of Africa".

<sup>10</sup> Entitled "COMESA Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Labour, Services, Right of Establishment and Residence".

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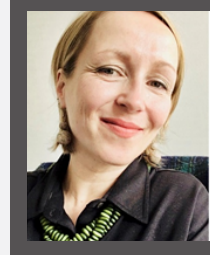
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## Annex 1

Policy and legal instruments addressing the distinct dimensions of human mobility in the context of climate change, disasters, and environmental degradation in Ethiopia			
Governance Sphere	Document	Publication	Reference to the topic
Migration	Immigration Proclamation (No. 354/2003)	2003	No
	Proclamation on Ethiopian Nationality (No. 378/2003)	2003	No
	Refugees Proclamation (No. 409/2004)	2004	No
	Diaspora Policy	2012	No
	A Proclamation to Provide for the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (No. 909/2015)	2015	No
	Refugees Proclamation (No. 1110/2019)	2019	No
	Ethiopia's Climate-Resilient Green Economy - Green Economy Strategy	2011	Yes
Climate Change	Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	2015	No
	Ethiopia's Climate-Resilient Green Economy National Adaptation Plan	2019	Yes
	Ethiopia's Climate Resilient Green Economy: National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Implementation Roadmap	2020	Yes
	Updated Nationally Determined Contribution	2021	Yes
	Environmental Policy	1997	Yes
Environment	Proclamation creating the Ministry of Environment and Forestry	2013	No
	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission Establishment Proclamation (No. 10/1995)	1995	No
Disaster Risk Reduction	National Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Fund Establishment Proclamation (No. ...)	2000	No
	National Policy and Strategy on Disaster Risk Management	2013	Yes
	Disaster Risk Management Strategic Programme and Investment Framework	2014	Yes
	National Disaster Risk Management Commission Establishment Council of Ministers Regulation (No. 363/2015)	2015	No
	Humanitarian and Disaster Resilience Plan (HDRP)	2018	Yes