# IGAD Ambassadorial lunch

**Permanent Mission of the Republic of Sudan, Geneva**  
20 July 2020

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## Participants

### Geneva, in-person

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<tr>
<th>Mission of Sudan</th>
<th>H.E. Ambassador Osman Abufatima A. Mohammed</th>
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<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>Ms Gillian Triggs, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection</td>
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<td>Mission of Ethiopia</td>
<td>H. E. Amb. Zeneke Korcho - PR</td>
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<td>Mission of Somalia</td>
<td>H. E. Amb. Ebyan Mahamed Salah - PR</td>
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<td>Mission of South Sudan</td>
<td>H. E. Amb. Mawien Ariik – PR</td>
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<td>European Union</td>
<td>H. E. Amb. Walter Stevens</td>
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### From Djibouti and Nairobi, virtually

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<tr>
<th>IGAD Secretariat, Djibouti</th>
<th>Fathia Alwan, Director Social Development</th>
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<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>Clementine Awu Nkweta Salami, Regional Director for East and Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes</td>
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<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>Ambassador Mohamed Abdi Affey, Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa</td>
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Background

1. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region hosts about 70 per cent of Africa’s forcibly displaced, and more than one-fifth of all forcibly displaced people world-wide.

2. On 25 March 2017, IGAD Heads of State and Government convened a Special Summit on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees. This was a landmark event that generated a comprehensive regional approach and a high-level political commitment to address the protracted plight of Somali refugees, and subsequently of all refugees in the region.

3. In December 2018, the affirmation of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) by UN Member States represented the political will and ambition of the international community to strengthen the cooperation and solidarity with refugees and affected host countries.

4. The objectives of the GCR are to: (i) ease pressures on host countries; (ii) enhance refugee self-reliance; (iii) expand access to third-country solutions; and (iv) support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity. The GCR seeks to achieve these four interlinked and interdependent objectives through the mobilization of political will, a broadened base of support, and arrangements that facilitate more equitable, sustained and predictable contributions among States and other relevant stakeholders. The Global Refugee Forum (GRF), the first of which was organized in Geneva in December 2019, and regional Support Platforms are two arrangements that are envisioned to facilitate greater responsibility sharing.

5. Over 1,000 pledges were made at the first GRF in December 2019, out of which 54 pledges were made by IGAD Member States. 162 pledges were identified that could potentially support the implementation of the policy pledges made by IGAD Member States. These 162 pledges are of a material, technical, and financial nature, and were made by donors and other stakeholders, including private sector entities and NGOs.

Summary of discussions

1. Participants commended Sudan’s leadership in the Nairobi Process and in particular in its new capacity as IGAD Chair.

2. IGAD countries, hosting the majority of refugees on the African continent, have generously provided protection to generations of displaced – welcoming them into their communities, providing access to schools, healthcare, and an increasing
array of services, contributing to the “global public good,” but at a cost. This inclusive approach needs to be supported to ensure its sustainability.

3. The final communiqué of the 36th Extraordinary Assembly of IGAD Heads of State and Government, held online on 14 July 2020, calls on IGAD Member States to uphold the inclusion of refugees in COVID-19 responses in the spirit of the 2017 Nairobi Declaration. IGAD Member States’ commitment to include refugees in their regional COVID-19 response is commendable.

4. The Nairobi Process has been important in demonstrating to the international community the effectiveness of regional approaches to forced displacement.

5. The steps taken in this regard, including the Djibouti (2018) and Kampala Declarations (2019), which focus on education and jobs/livelihoods, respectively, speak to the commitment of the leadership of IGAD member states to improve the lives of refugees and host communities.

6. There is keen interest from States and other stakeholders to hear about next steps for the IGAD Support Platform launched at the Global Refugee Forum.

7. Participants underscored the importance of operationalizing the IGAD Support Platform.

8. COVID-19 has increased the burden on the host countries that face multiple development challenges.

9. While the emphasis will most likely continue to be on the COVID-19 pandemic for some time, maintaining the momentum of the GRF, at which the Support Platform was born, is crucial.

10. Convening this IGAD Ambassadorial meeting is an important demonstration of the commitment to sustain the momentum.

11. The Support Platform’s ownership by Member States, facilitated by the IGAD Secretariat, is critical as demonstrated through the convening of this meeting.

12. Within the sub-region, the Support Platform will play an important role in mobilizing strong political will and commitment to advance the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and Plan of Action, as well as subsequent Declarations and Plans of Action (referred to collectively as the Nairobi Process). The Support Platform is an important tool to ensure that the regional commitments are furthered at a domestic level, including by broadening the support base for their implementation.

13. In line with the spirit of international solidarity that inspires the GCR and the commitment to burden-and responsibility sharing, the Platform could also play a
meaningful role in addressing the direct and secondary impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

14. The Support Platform seeks to engage a wide range of partners – humanitarian, development, international financial institutions, and the private sector – that have an interest in sustained commitment and solidarity with IGAD countries. There is no minimum "price of admission" other than this commitment.

15. As recognized by the GCR, the “support” envisioned can take a variety of forms – financial, technical, political, or advocacy.

16. The improvements in data concerning refugee populations including disaggregated information are appreciated. The importance of accurate and reliable data is stressed so that policies and solutions can be tailored appropriately.

17. The EU is proud to be part of this process, which started with the Nairobi Declaration, and is firmly committed to remain a reliable partner. The EU appreciates the strong partnership with IGAD governments and IGAD Secretariat in support of refugees and host communities using the thematic regional approach.

18. Organizing a first virtual Support Platform meeting in the coming months would help to leverage donor interest and benefit the communities in the region greatly.

19. Support provided through the IGAD Support Platform should be geared towards directly supporting national costed plans submitted by IGAD members on education, jobs and livelihoods, and health sectors.

20. Priorities for the coming year include:

⇒ Ensuring that we do not lose what has been achieved and worked well.
⇒ Widening and deepening the participation and support of other partners and stakeholders in the interest of greater and more equitable burden and responsibility sharing. The first regional Support Platform meeting has to provide the opportunity to move on this agenda.
⇒ Helping country and regional exchanges on policy implementation, development priorities, and better ways to take displacement contexts into account across political, humanitarian, and development efforts. In this respect, given the current situation, the platform should provide a forum to discuss and shape how to address forced displacement, refugees, and host communities within wider COVID-19 responses.

21. Suggestions for a first IGAD Support Platform meeting include:

⇒ The virtual Support Platform meeting could focus on leveraging the GRF pledges to galvanize political, technical, and financial support for IGAD Member States.
Æ A portfolio of prioritized needs and costed plans or projects from IGAD Member States, based on GRF pledges, could be presented for matching with donor GRF pledges.
Æ The Support Platform meeting could provide donors and other stakeholders with an opportunity to share their planned and proposed interventions to support the implementation of the pledges and commitments made by IGAD Member States.
Æ In this process, priority could be given to leveraging the GRF pledges that are most relevant to address the short and medium-term COVID-19-related needs and priorities.
Æ The meeting could also explore how the Support Platform could be used to advance new opportunities for solutions for displaced communities in the context of the ongoing transitions in Sudan and South Sudan.

22. **UNHCR affirmed its readiness to assist** with identifying potential matching opportunities of pledges made by donors and other stakeholders at the Global Refugee Forum with policy pledges made by IGAD Member States (please refer to Matrix in attachment).

23. Participants stressed the importance of **coming together regularly to exchange** ideas on the Support Platform and to link up with capitals to take the process forward.