

**DJIBOUTI DECLARATION
ON REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON REFUGEE EDUCATION
IN IGAD MEMBER STATES**

Theme:

*“Regional Quality Education Standards and Inclusion into National Systems for
refugee children in line with CRRF, SDG 4 and Agenda 2063 on Education”*

14 December 2017

Preamble

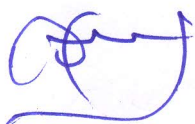
We, the Ministers in charge of Education in the IGAD Member States, convening in Djibouti on 14th December 2017 at the Regional Conference on Education for Refugees in IGAD Member States:

1. **Recalling** relevant national, regional and international strategies, frameworks and initiatives, notably the Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and Reintegration of Returnees in Somalia, and its accompanying Plan of Action; the IGAD Regional Migration Policy Framework and the Migration Action Plan; the African Union’s Agenda 2063 on Education; the 2016 New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants, including its Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF); and the Sustainable Development Goals, notably Goal 4;
2. **Deeply concerned** by the disruption that conflict and displacement have on the education of refugees, returnees, host communities and other people of concern in the IGAD region, and the impact that this has on their aspirations and their contribution to society and the economy in host communities and upon return;
3. **Particularly concerned** by the disproportionate impact that conflict and forced displacement have on the education of women and girls, and that girls and boys, as well as people with disabilities must have equal access to education and skills training at all levels;
4. **Alarmed** that children and young people experience trauma as a result of conflict, including physical abuse and sexual violence, and the need to address their psycho-social wellbeing in education;
5. **Recognising** that participation in education delivers critical protection outcomes for refugee children and youth and that schools provide a safe place for refugee and returnee children to learn and connect meaningfully with peers from host communities.
6. **Aware of** the broader implications of disrupted access to education and economic opportunities for refugee, returnee, host community youth and the resulting effects of these on stability and sustainable development; **Also aware of** the role of education, training and employment in preventing the marginalisation and radicalization of young people in the IGAD region;

7. **Mindful of** the existence of regional and continental frameworks for the recognition of education qualifications and the need for IGAD and Member States to domesticate and implement such frameworks, adapting them to education at different stages and for different school levels including the needs of refugee education in the region;
8. **Welcoming** the leadership role of IGAD in prioritizing refugee, returnee and host community education within the development agenda of the region and in mobilizing partnerships to address this very critical concern in our respective countries;
9. **Appreciating** the initiative of the Government of the Republic Djibouti, supported by the IGAD Secretariat and partners including the EU, UNHCR and GIZ to organise and host this first Regional Conference on Refugee Education;
10. **Noting, with satisfaction,** the concerted efforts and continued support of our humanitarian and development partners in ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality education and training skills that will allow refugees to participate in gainful employment, sustainable development and peace in the region;
11. **Reaffirming and building on the** commitments made by our Heads of State and Government at the IGAD Special Summit in Nairobi and the resulting Declaration and Plan of Action to enhance education, training and skills development for all refugees, returnees and host communities in the region, to reduce their dependence on humanitarian assistance and prepare them for gainful employment in host communities and upon return;
12. **Further reaffirming** our commitments in support of improving the access and quality of education for refugees, returnees and host communities including the specific targets and milestones set within the Nairobi Plan of Action and its Results Framework, including the commitment to invest in comprehensive skills development for refugees and host communities, strengthening their employability, self-reliance, social inclusion, and resilience;
13. **Reiterating** also our commitment to progressively advance the integration of the needs of refugees, returnees and host communities into national development plans and access to services, as well as the need to strengthen the capacity of host countries and countries of return for the delivery of services, and the request to development actors and multilateral donors to mobilize resources to promote socio-economic development, including education, for the mutual benefit of refugees and host communities;
14. **Recognizing** the need for an IGAD comprehensive regional approach and strong co-operation among Member States and partners to ensure inclusive and quality education for refugees, returnees and host communities.

DO HEREBY AGREE TO:

15. Take collective responsibility to ensure that every refugee, returnee and members of host communities have access to quality education in a safe learning environment within our respective countries without discrimination;



16. Adopt and implement the accompanying Action Plan on education of refugees, returnees and members of host communities in the IGAD region;
17. Establish an IGAD Regional Experts and Ministerial Committee of Education to oversee the proper implementation of all agreed standards, policy instruments and frameworks for education for all, including refugees, returnees and members of host communities;
18. Integrate refugees into national education policies, strategies, programs and plans of action in our respective countries;

We hereby solemnly declare as follows:

A. On Regional Education Quality Standards

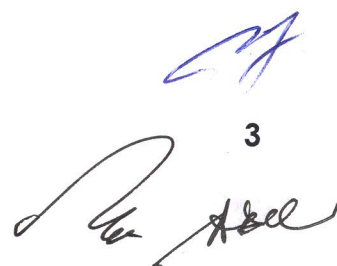
19. Establish regional minimum education standards and targets on access and delivery of quality education for pre-primary, primary, secondary, higher education including TVET and education for people with special needs to benefit refugees, returnees and host communities in order to maximize learning outcomes.
20. Adopt national education standards and include refugees in national systems to benefit from established standards within IGAD member states.
21. Task the IGAD Secretariat to work with Member States to coordinate and guide the implementation, monitoring and follow up of the established minimum standards for refugees, returnees and host communities.

B. On Regional Skills Development for Refugees

22. Urge local and international partners to provide sustained and increased support for infrastructure and capacity building for skills development, particularly in refugee-hosting areas.
23. Match skills training to job opportunities in the IGAD region in order to enable access to secure livelihoods, self-reliance and dignified work for refugees as provided for in the 1951 Refugee Convention.

C. On Inclusion of Refugee Education in National Education Systems

24. Integrate education for refugees and returnees into National Education Sector Plans by 2020.
25. Enhance the capacity of IGAD Member States to integrate education for refugee and returnees into national education systems.
26. Ensure the protection of refugees in national education systems particularly refugee and returnee children and their psycho-social well-being through a multi sectoral approach.



27. Respond to the distinct learning needs of refugee and returnee boys and girls and ensure they have equitable and inclusive access to education.
28. Exchange good practices and expertise in the inclusion of refugee and returnee teachers in national education systems.
29. Achieve inclusive and equitable access for refugees and returnees to quality higher education in line with national targets of host countries and countries of origin.
30. Simplify the mechanism for refugee children to access quality education and facilitate their rapid entry into the national education system.

D. On Accreditation and Certification of Education Programmes

31. Recognise and validate the qualifications of refugees and returnees across all levels of education which is important for the development of the entire IGAD region.
32. Call upon all IGAD Member States to ratify and domesticate the Convention on Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States, as a basis for the recognition of refugee and returnee qualifications.

E. On Financing, Partnerships and Monitoring in Support of Refugee Education

33. Commit to developing costed, long-term refugee education response strategies, as part of national education sector plans based on a comprehensive mapping of current and emerging resources and call upon humanitarian and development partners to support this process.
34. Urge International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and bilateral, regional and international partners, in the spirit of responsibility sharing, to increase multi-year, predictable and sustainable support to IGAD and its Member States to ensure refugee and host community children and youth have greater access to and quality of education; also ensure that this support is transparent and aligned with national education sector plans;
35. Call upon IFIs and international partners to accelerate their investment in the education sector in countries of origin to help support the voluntary return and sustainable reintegration of returnees and IDPs in line with the National Development Plan;
36. Strengthen the capacity of the IGAD secretariat to coordinate and monitor the commitments of Member States towards quality education and learning for refugees, returnees and host communities. This includes the establishment of the regular platform of the Ministerial Committee on Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI);
37. Enhance the capacity of Member States to implement commitments to quality education and learning for refugees, returnees and host communities.

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38. Align financing from member states and partners to strengthen national systems and plans with a focus on the delivery of quality education and learning outcomes for refugees, returnees and host communities.

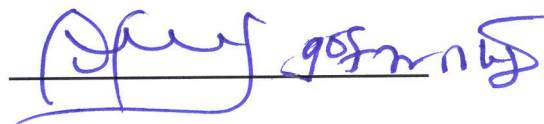
We commit to remain actively seized of this matter

Done on this 14th Day of December 2017 in Djibouti, Republic of Djibouti

Minister of National Education and Vocational Training (MENFOP)
Djibouti, Republic of Djibouti



Minister of Education
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



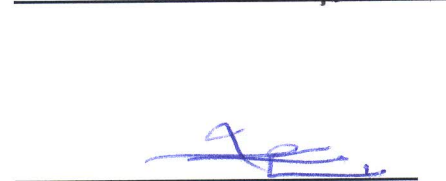
Minister of Education, Science and Technology
Republic of Kenya
Nairobi, Kenya



Minister of Education, Culture and Higher Education
Government of Federal of Somalia
Mogadishu, Somalia



Minister of Education and Instruction
Republic of South Sudan
Juba, South Sudan



Minster of Education
Republic of Sudan
Khartoum, Sudan



Minister of Education & Sports
Republic of Uganda
Kampala, Uganda

