[Annex to the Djibouti Declaration on Regional Refugee Education]

Djibouti Plan of Action on Refugee Education in IGAD Member States

Introduction

Hosted by the Government of the Republic of Djibouti, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) convened a regional ministerial meeting in Djibouti on the 14th of December 2017, which was undertaken in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the European Union, and the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ).

At the meeting, IGAD ministers in charge of education resolved to take collective responsibility to ensure that every refugee, returnee and member of host communities has access to quality education in a safe learning environment within their respective countries without discrimination. They further committed to adopt and implement this Action Plan on education of refugees, returnees and members of host communities in the IGAD region; 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; and Integrate refugees into national education policies, strategies, programs and plans of action in their respective countries. These commitments are expressed in the Djibouti Declaration on Regional Refugee Education, to which this Action Plan is annexed, and they adopted this Action Plan, which outlines the actions to be carried out in the delivery of quality education and learning outcomes for refugees, returnees and host communities in the region.

The Action Plan derives from the Declaration of the Regional Ministerial Conference on Refugee Education in IGAD Member States held in Djibouti from 12th to 14th December 2017; and previous commitments made by the IGAD Member States that are signatories to the 2016 New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants, especially the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), as well as the specific commitments made by countries in the region, including the Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and Reintegration of Returnees in Somalia and its accompanying Plan of Action, as well as the implementation of SDG 4.

On inclusion of refugee education in national education systems

1. Integrate education for refugees and returnees into Education Sector Plans (ESPs) by 2020. This will include:
    - Determination of the status of Member States in their integration of education of refugees and returnees into ESPs;
    - Mapping existing initiatives, proposals and activities to integrate the education of refugees and returnees into ESPs;

- Supporting activities that lead to the integration of refugees and returnees into National Education Systems;
- Strengthening EMIS data collection to include the needs of refugees and returnees;
- Fully integrate schools for refugees, including camp-based systems, into the national education systems.

2. Develop IGAD's capacity and strategies to support Member States in developing Education Sector Plans that integrate education for refugee and returnees into national systems. This will include:
    - Supporting Member States with expertise on refugee education;
    - Sharing good practices and lessons learned to improve refugee and returnee education within the region;
    - Training on Education Sector Planning processes.

3. Ensure the protection of refugees in national education systems, particularly the safety and psycho-social well-being of refugee and returnee children through a multi sectoral approach. This will include:
    - Support schools to provide a safe environment that protects children from sexual and gender based violence, forced recruitment, child labour and other harmful practices and risks.
    - Support a protection system that responds to the mental health and psycho-social needs of refugee and returnee learners.

4. Recognise and respond to the distinct learning needs of refugee and returnee boys and girls to ensure equitable and inclusive access to education. This will include:
    - Consideration of the special needs of learners and adapting curricula, educational material, learning spaces to increase participation and improved learning outcomes.
    - Expansion and strengthening of accelerated and bridging learning programmes to increase the enrolment and retention of refugee girls and boys in education.
    - Supporting the capacity of the community and families to support their children's learning.
    - Support refugee and returnee children as appropriate in making language transitions in their countries of asylum or return.
    - Provide as appropriate programs that support mother-tongue proficiency for refugee children.

5. Strengthen regional frameworks to promote the inclusion of refugee teachers, and their professional development and certification, in national education systems and support of equivalency. This will include:
    - Facilitation of teacher accreditation and certification across borders;
    - Identification and implementation of methods to fast-track training and certification;
    - Progressively align pay and conditions of service across host community and refugee teachers as it relates to experience and qualifications;
    - Support continuous pre-service and in-service professional development of refugee and host community teachers;

- Increase gender parity and equalize career progression opportunities among teachers.

6. Invest in expansion of distance learning opportunities for refugees, through support and investments in infrastructure and capacity, including IT capacity, with attention to language-of-instruction challenges;

7. Identify emerging community college-type programmes as a platform for expansion, with development of modular training programmes targeted to country-specific training priorities;

8. Work with international partners and Member States to extend provision of scholarships based on identified need and equity considerations;

9. Support increased refugee access to secondary education as a way to increase student throughput to higher education;

10. Reinforce the IGAD universities network's capacity to monitor cross-border provision of higher education opportunities, and strengthen linkages between Member States;

11. Support alternative pathways to higher education for youth.

On Regional Education Quality Standards for Delivery of Education for Refugees

12. Develop an agreed set of regional minimum education standards and targets for quality education at all levels for refugees and returnees with a focus on the maximization of learning outcomes.

13. Support language-of-instruction initiatives to facilitate the integration of refugees and returnees in national education systems as well as programs that support retention of their local languages;

14. Request IGAD to monitor the implementation of SDG 4 road maps established by Member States in relation to refugees, returnees and host communities to maximize learning outcomes;

15. Reinforce the capacity of IGAD and Member States to monitor inclusion of refugees, returnees and host communities in national education systems including the access to public schools, as well as recognition and registration of schools existing in refugee-hosting locations;

16. Integrate refugees and returnees in National Education Sector Plans of Member States, including Education Monitoring Information Systems (EMIS), to facilitate comprehensive planning and monitoring of education for refugees, returnees and host communities;

17. Establish an IGAD regional committee to ensure regular reporting on the implementation, monitoring and evaluation on the agreed upon minimum standards and targets.

On Regional Skills Development for Refugees

18. Determine demand for skills training in host countries and countries of return through a review of existing and commission of new market assessments;

19. Form a Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) expert group to develop a mechanism for linking TVET institutions across IGAD countries, identify options in ensuring continuity in skills development programs, and exchange experiences within and across borders;

20. Promote public-private partnerships to scale up programs that have shown success in linking training and job opportunities.

On accreditation and certification of education programmes

21. Develop regional and national policies for the recognition of qualifications held by refugees and returnees, including teachers and learners in order to enable integration into national education systems and access to social services;

22. Put in place a regional mechanism for recognition of qualifications for the IGAD region based on:
    - Mutual recognition of formal qualifications obtained throughout the education systems of all IGAD Member States;
    - Mutual recognition of accreditation of qualifications obtained through informal learning and professional skills training;
    - Cross-border education collaboration between neighbouring districts.

23. Develop a regional IGAD framework for establishing the equivalency of education qualifications, including mechanisms to enable refugee students, who do not possess certification of prior school attainment or other documentation, to pursue education at the level at which they left through appropriate means rather than high-stakes examinations;

24. Develop a common regional approach for teacher accreditation including accelerated programmes for refugee and returnee teachers;

25. Establish a technical working group consisting of IGAD Member States and representatives of all relevant stakeholders to:
    - Assess the status of recognition in each Member State;
    - Describe criteria for a mechanism for recognition of academic qualifications;
    - Elaborate the criteria for recognition and equivalency including quality assurance tools and mechanisms.
    - Generate a proposal, including a financing strategy, on a framework and mechanism for mutual recognition and equivalency that will be presented to the IGAD ministerial meeting in 2019;

On financing, partnerships and monitoring in support of refugee education

26. Develop 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;

27. Ensure the integration of these commitments and actions into the national action plans that are being developed in response to the Nairobi Plan of Action;

28. Mobilise immediate finance to take forward rapidly commitments agreed at the conference;

29. Establish and reinforce regional and national-level coordination, monitoring and tracking of activities and finance in support of the education sector including refugees;

30. Identify best practices and value for money in financing of refugee and returnee education from an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of different financing strategies and mechanisms to enhance refugee and host community education;

31. Explore innovative financing mechanisms for preparedness and the rapid provision of education for new refugees including use of the GPE Framework for Fragile States to fund emergency activities;

32. Generate longer term financing strategies with the involvement of relevant ministries, including exploring the potential use of pooled financing mechanisms, that ensure continuity between humanitarian and development support to increase long term, coordinated investment for national education systems to include refugees and returnees;

33. Explore opportunities for public-private partnerships in support of education for refugees and returnees;

34. Develop a coherent partnership, resource mobilization and communication strategy at both regional and national levels including the establishment of an IGAD regional partnership forum in support of education.

35. Operationalize the IGAD regional coordination mechanisms, particularly the Ministerial Committee on Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI), to oversee the implementation of this Action Plan;
    - Develop terms of reference for the Ministerial Committee;
    - Develop a regional policy framework for education, science, technology and innovation, including skills and training programs;
    - Establish a coordination unit within the IGAD Secretariat to coordinate implementation of this Plan of Action;

36. Update the regional results framework of the Nairobi Plan of Action to include the commitments and actions of this conference.