



PEACE, PROSPERITY AND
REGIONAL INTEGRATION



THE IGAD REGIONAL GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY 2023-2030

Equality, Inclusion and Empowerment



FOREWORD



A review of progress over the past decades in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment targets set in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and, concomitantly, SDGs paints a mixed picture. Whereas significant achievements have been registered in norm setting and increasing women's participation in leadership and decision-making among other areas, the implementation of these normative standards remains a key challenge. The set targets for gender equality and women's empowerment were largely not achieved, meaning that all stakeholders need to step up their efforts towards achieving this critical development goal.

The Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) Gender Equality Strategy (2023-2030) is predicated on the recognition that gender equality is a fundamental prerequisite for the socio-economic development and political transformation of IGAD Member States and, indeed, the rest of the continent of Africa. The overarching vision of IGAD

is to achieve peace and sustainable development in the IGAD Member States. Among a myriad of other development priorities and activities, IGAD is committed to creating opportunities for women, men, girls, and boys, disadvantaged and marginalized people and communities, especially those in arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs), leaving no one behind, so that everyone can effectively participate and benefit from IGAD development agenda in member countries. It is our sincere hope that this inclusive growth and social cohesion that will lead to peaceful, stable, and vibrant societies in our region.

Central to this Strategy for IGAD is the need to mobilize all Member States, Development Partners, Civil Society Organizations, the Private Sector and Citizens in our region to promote the shared goal of gender equality and women's empowerment. We recognize that gender equality and women's empowerment must be systematically and consistently pursued, starting with the formulation of policies that incorporate gender equality and the empowerment of women to implementation and programming.

Within this strategy, the most important issues that are addressed with regard to gender equality and women's empowerment are: women's rights as human rights, the development and improvement of inclusion and representative democracy; economic empowerment for women without disempowering men; education for girls and boys; equitable access and benefits from agriculture and natural resources; peace and security for all as well as women's and men's common acknowledgement of the need to remove imbalances in society and their shared responsibility in doing so.

In the long term, IGAD hopes to help build a region where women participate fully in decision-making have easy access to knowledge because it has been brought closer to them, their skills are optimized, and capacities tapped to engage in greater economic opportunities. In pursuit of this vision, we see a thriving environment in which women and men engage equitably in

enterprise and public service delivery; and a region where no man, woman or child faces institutionalized insecurity and abuse.

Within IGAD, this strategy builds to an existing array of tools and building blocks that are part of our approach to better programming. It will also serve as the platform to anchor IGAD's operational and resource mobilization activities and focus our efforts to upscale gender equality and women's empowerment for sustainable development., enhanced resilience, regional integration, and peace in IGAD Member States and Africa as a whole.

The implementation of this strategy will be driven by a strong commitment to achieve the best results and positive impacts, which IGAD will not achieve alone. This, therefore, calls for strong partnerships and collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, notably among Member States, Donors and Development Partners, Civil Society Organizations, the Private Sector and Citizens (women and men) in the region.

Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu

IGAD Executive Secretary

MESSAGE FROM THE GENDER PROGRAMME MANAGER



It has been a great honor to steer the development of the IGAD Gender Equality Strategy. The strategy will guide Member States and IGAD's work on gender equality and women's empowerment in the IGAD Region. Under the theme - Gender Equality, Inclusion and Empowerment, the strategy provides a solid foundation for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the IGAD Region and is a useful reference as the IGAD community takes stock of progress made in promoting and upholding women's rights since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995.

Within IGAD, the period 2023 - 2030 is of special relevance on matters related to GEWE as it coincides with its current development strategy implementation, the restructuring of the organization's approach to gender for comprehensive coordination in-

ternally and with Member States, the revival and strengthening of Women, Peace and security forum, the Gender Land Caucus and other initiatives. At the same time, IGAD has continued to provide a platform for dialogue among and with Member States on gender issues, highlighting boys, girls, men, and women's vital contribution throughout the social, economic, cultural, and political spheres of development in the region.

This strategy also provides an opportunity to take stock of the achievements, identify existing gaps in gender equality and women's empowerment, and provide recommendations and guidance to Member States and IGAD to promote equitable social and economic development, environment and natural resources management, climate resilience, and political systems. The overarching aims of this strategy are to help IGAD Member States achieve sustainable development goals of providing sustainable livelihoods and healthy diets for all men, women, boys, and girls, while protecting the resource base for future generations.

Over the implementation period, it is our sincere hope that the strategy will provide IGAD with a vision and a shared framework of accountability, collectively and individually, towards achieving the goals, objectives, and implementation plans to enhance gender equality and women's empowerment that are part of this strategy. Building on lessons learned, the strategy also underlines that to make good on the ambitious objectives that are set in the strategy, IGAD needs to go beyond doing "business as usual". We need to tackle the root causes of gender inequalities with boldness and determination. The strategy urges all of us to see women and men as equal partners, not only in our work with Member States but also within our own organization.

We all have a part to play and a lot to gain in making this happen.

Mrs. Amina Farah Maalim

IGAD Gender Programme Manager

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of this Gender Equality Strategy has taken a lot of effort, dedication, and teamwork. The IGAD Secretariat would not have been able to accomplish this task without the technical and professional commitment and support from Member States in providing the direction, time for consultation and review as well as validation of the draft strategy and results framework. We thank all the IGAD Member States who contributed to the process through sectoral and national feedback on the state of gender affairs, as well as the consolidated information which provided the basis for this strategy.

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IGAD likewise recognizes and appreciates the enormous support received from IGAD Development Partners, especially Global Affairs Canada, Sweden, UNDP, UNWOMEN and GIZ for their continued support.



ACRONYMS

ADC	Agency for Development Concerns
AED	Agriculture and Environment Division
AEC	Africa Economic Community
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
ASAL	Arid and Semi-Arid Land
AU	African Union
AUA	African Union's Agenda
AUGP	African Union Gender Policy
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program
CBMPs	Cross Border and Mobile Populations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEWARN	Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FTA	Free Trade Area
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GAD	Gender And Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GESPI	Gender Equality Seal for Public Institutions
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICPAC	IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre
ICPALD	IGAD Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IDDRSI	IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ISAP	Institutional Strengthening Action Programme
REC	Regional Economic Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SIDA	The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SMEs	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
UNICEF	United Nations Children's' Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UN Women	The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is a Regional Economic Community with a membership of eight countries in Africa namely - Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. The vision of IGAD is to achieve peace, prosperity, and regional integration in the IGAD region. The IGAD Gender Equality Strategy sets the strategic framework for priority interventions areas of the implementation of IGAD's Vision 2050 and builds on several ongoing programs established to develop resilient ecosystems and economic growth.

The gender strategy outlines an approach that intends to translate IGAD's commitments to gender equality, inclusion, and empowerment into demonstrable results and impacts. It also outlines an accountability structure for ensuring policy oversight and achievement of those results and aims to:

- Respond to the most pressing and emerging gender priorities in the IGAD region,
- Provide a roadmap for IGAD both at the secretariat and specialized/technical offices level to advance gender equality in their programs, and
- To create an enabling environment for promoting gender equality.

This strategy recognizes three key issues that define the regional context.

- Gender equality is a core development objective, and it is also a smart development policy and business practice. No society can develop sustainably without transforming the distribution of opportunities, resources and choices for men and women so that both have power to shape their own lives.
- For IGAD to fulfil the full potential of its gender programming, it must be recognized that women and girls are not a homogeneous group. Therefore, there is a need to be responsive to the priorities of all groups among women and girls together with other social groups often excluded.
- Women's empowerment is a critical aspect of achieving gender equality.

Making progress towards gender equality is key to meeting IGAD's overall development goal of 'Transformation towards sustainable development, resilience and stability in the IGAD Region.' In addition, it responds to all the region's most stubborn drivers of poverty and inequality i.e., conflict or insecurity, climate change, political and economic shocks. At the same time, even though women make important contributions to household livelihoods and rural economies and play a vital role in domestic care and social and economic development of communities, these contributions are not fully recognized and appreciated. For women to reach their full potential, persistent gender gaps in access to and control over land, finance, decision-making, training and information, and other productive inputs must be closed to attain gender equality and women's empowerment. Just as importantly, how social norms and institutions, governing frameworks and markets explicitly or implicitly constrain women must be understood and addressed. Similarly, addressing gender disparities is critical to the consolidation of peace and security in fragile ASAL environments, where the contestation for scarce resources often leads to conflict. Violent conflict and fragility affect men, women, boys and girls in different ways, a difference that is seldom recognized or addressed in mainstream conflict and reconstruction policies and programs.

The Gender Equality Strategy 2023-2030 builds on this context, the progress and lessons learned from implementing the previous strategy and draws valuable insights from assessments and evaluations that were done on the implementation of the previous strategy to focus on the most pressing priority areas for IGAD's which focuses on six areas that remain fundamental to IGAD's vision. The priorities include:

- Increase women's participation in sustainable management of natural resources, resilience building, food, and nutrition security;
- Advance gender equality in regional trade and economic integration;
- Increase equitable access to health and basic social services for gender transformation;
- Increase the effective participation of women in peace building and conflict management at all levels of decision-making and protect women living in situations of conflict;
- Advance efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking, sexual exploitation, and all other forms of exploitation, and
- Strengthen IGAD's institutional capacity for leadership and coordination of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment interventions.

Because of IGAD's structural complexities and broad development mandate, the responsibility for gender equality will rest on the leadership of various divisions, specialized offices, and Member States. All decision-making centers will advance gender equality as a cross-cutting priority. In this context, the Regional Gender Equality Strategy not only provides an overarching framework of coherence in priorities and guidance but identifies the pathways that will be used to operationalize the same.

At the operational level, the Implementation Plan will be the overarching framework that clarifies further divisional/sectoral responsibility for gender mainstreaming and achieving the targets for each strategic priority area as well as clarity and division of labor between the Secretariat and Member State roles and responsibilities. The IGAD gender mainstreaming architecture, on the other hand, will ensure institutional accountability for the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy. This internal monitoring mechanism will be crucial for assessing compliance with the Strategy and will serve as the basis for holding all staff members accountable for documenting good practices, lessons learned and monitoring performance.



CHAPTER 1

GENDER EQUALITY, INCLUSION AND EMPOWERMENT IN THE IGAD REGION

CHAPTER 1: GENDER EQUALITY, INCLUSION AND EMPOWERMENT IN THE IGAD REGION

1. Introduction

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is a Regional Economic Community with a membership of eight countries in Africa, namely Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. The vision of IGAD is to achieve peace, prosperity, and regional integration in the IGAD region. The Secretariat of IGAD is located in Djibouti. IGAD fosters collaboration among Member States through four overarching pillars including Agriculture and Environment, Economic Cooperation, Health, and Social Development, Peace, and Security.

This Regional Gender Equality Strategy is designed to enable IGAD, its Member States and development actors to respond cohesively to current regional priorities. As a complement to many other IGAD regional policy documents, the regional gender equality strategy is intended to promote coherence and improve the efficiency of gender-responsive and transformative programming. The strategy supports developing easy and efficient approaches and methodologies to promote gender equality as well as to understand the different interactions or synergies in gender transformative programming.

Making progress towards gender equality is key to meeting IGAD's overall development goal of 'Transformation towards sustainable development, resilience and stability in the IGAD Region' and responds to all the region's most stubborn drivers of poverty and inequality, i.e., conflict or insecurity, climate change, political and economic shocks. At the same time, even though women make important contributions to household livelihoods, food and nutrition security and rural economies and play a vital role in domestic care and social and economic development in their communities, these contributions are generally understated and not fully appreciated. To achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, it is essential to eliminate persistent gender disparities in areas such as access to and control over land, financial resources, decision-making, education, and information access. Equally crucial is recognizing and tackling the social norms, institutional structures, legal frameworks, and market dynamics that either overtly or subtly restrict women's opportunities and rights.

Addressing gender disparities is critical to the consolidation of peace and security in fragile ASAL environments, where the contestation for scarce resources often leads to conflict. Violent conflict and fragility affect men, women, boys and girls in different ways, a difference that is seldom recognized or addressed in mainstream conflict and reconstruction policies and programs. At the same time, extended exposure to conflict and crisis can give rise to new dynamics in the traditional gender roles that women and men assume. These shifts can present opportunities to reassess and transform gender roles for positive change. While gender equality challenges that are prevalent in fragile and conflict-affected situations are broadly similar in the region, contextual factors in each country in that IGAD Member States require different operational approaches.

1.1 Objectives of the Strategy

The IGAD Gender Equality Strategy 2023-2030 sets the strategic framework for priority interventions in the implementation of IGAD Vision 2050 and builds on several on-going Programmes established to develop resilient ecosystems and economic growth. The programmes include IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI), regional CAADP Compact, Institutional Strengthening Action Program (ISAP), Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food Security, Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration, Social Development, Peace and Security, Gender Affairs, and other

strategies and policy papers which underpin the IGAD regional programmes. The main intervention areas of this Strategy are food security, socio-economic development, sustainable utilization of transboundary resources, and peace and security. Additionally, several interventions have been outlined under corporate development services.

This gender strategy outlines an approach that intends to translate IGAD's commitments to gender equality, inclusion, and empowerment into demonstrable results. It also outlines an accountability structure for ensuring policy oversight and achievement of those results. The regional gender equality strategy aims to:

- Respond to the most pressing and emerging gender priorities in the IGAD region;
- Provide a roadmap for IGAD both at the secretariat and specialized/technical offices level to advance gender equality in their programs; and
- Create an enabling environment for promoting gender equality.

The strategy is anchored on the overarching aim and objective of building and accelerating regional integration and cross border cooperation among Member States.

Overview of IGAD Regional Strategy



Strategy Development Process: The process of developing this strategy was undertaken in four phases. The initial phase began with the commissioning of the work and analysis of IGAD's rich pool of reports, studies, strategies, tools, and other documents to better understand IGAD's current programming situation and progress made over the last five years. The second phase was marked by a participatory evaluation of the previous gender strategy (2016-2020) undertaken with all gender focal points and team members from various divisions and specialized/technical offices. The third phase was a series of data collection exercises through physical and virtual key informant interviews with various decision makers in the organization, IGAD Member States panel of experts, development partners and other stakeholders in a process that sought to triangulate, clarify, and generate new additional information and ideas that were then concretized into the first draft of the gender strategy. The final phase of the process was the drafting and validation of the strategy in a joint workshop between gender focal points in IGAD and Member States. The main outcome of this validation workshop was also to identify key elements of the strategy that will inform the implementation strategy/plan of action. This

strategy is expected to provide IGAD staff, Member States and partners with a clear understanding of IGAD's strategic priorities in the medium term for gender equality and the work IGAD plans to do on gender in the region.

1.2 What this strategy is about – Gender Equality, Inclusion and Empowerment

Gender Equality

According to the United Nations, gender equality is a fundamental human right and a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world. Gender equality is a core development objective, and it is also a smart development policy and business practice. No society can develop sustainably without transforming the distribution of opportunities, resources and choices for men and women so that both have power to shape their own lives.

In the IGAD Region, just like in many other parts of the world, there has been some progress over the last decades: More girls are going to school, fewer girls are forced into early marriage, and more women are serving in positions of leadership, including parliament, where laws are drafted and revised to advance gender equality. Despite these gains, however, many challenges remain: discriminatory laws and social norms remain pervasive, women continue to be underrepresented at all levels of political leadership, low representation in the labor force and increased impacts of conflict. According to the IGAD Migration Statistics Report in October 2021, between 2010-2019, the labor force in the IGAD region increased by 27 percent, from 93.3 million to 118.6 million people. The population of women in the labor force rose from 45.7 million in 2010 to 58.1 million in 2019, representing a 27.2 percent increase.

During the same period, the population of men in the labor force increased from 47.6 million to 60.4 million, representing a 26.8 percent increase. The number of men in the labor force is however much higher than the number of women in all the years, even though there are more women in the working-age population in the region. In the past few years, the coronavirus outbreak exacerbated existing inequalities for women and girls across every sphere – from health and the economy to security and social protection.

Gender and Social Inclusion: For IGAD to fulfil the full potential of its gender programming, it must be recognized that even women and girls are not a homogeneous group. Therefore, there is a need to be responsive to the priorities of all groups among the women and girls together with other social groups who are often excluded from decision-making and resources allocation such as women with different needs, women with disability, women from minority group, migrant women, aged women or even those living in remote areas such as among pastoralist communities etc. To promote inclusion, IGAD will keep a close focus on groups that may need special attention to facilitate their participation, changes needed in the institutions in which these groups should be included, agents who can help facilitate the inclusion, and mechanisms or processes through which inclusion can occur in a process that will often begin from a clear understanding of existing decision-making processes and the often complex local political and social contexts all through to the design of effective monitoring and evaluation systems are essential to ensure that efforts to promote inclusion are successful and to make adjustments where they are not.

Women's Empowerment: Empowered women and girls contribute to the health and productivity of their families, communities, and countries, creating a ripple effect that benefits everyone. Women's empowerment is a critical aspect of achieving gender equality. It includes increasing a woman's sense of self-worth, her decision-making power, her access to opportunities and resources, her power and control over her own life inside and outside the home, and her ability to effect change. (Source: /popin/unfpa/taskforce/guide/iatfwemp.gdl.htm). Across all of IGAD's strategic areas of focus, women's empowerment will mean programming with a focus on the ability of women and girls to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability has previously been denied be it in education, health, environment, natural resources management or peace and security. Women's empowerment has five components, including both civil

and political as well as cultural, economic and social dimensions: (i) women's sense of self-worth; (ii) their right to have and to determine choices; (iii) their right to have access to opportunities and resources; (iv) their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; (v) and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

1.3 Alignment with Global and Continental Normative Frameworks

The SDGs as well as the AU 2063 agenda provide a good framework for mapping out IGAD's biggest potentials to contribute and to develop a focused action plan for genuine impact on gender and development in the region. They also provide a basis upon which to ask - how do we contribute to gender related development goals? How can IGAD share progress in these areas? What tools, resources and mechanisms are necessary and available to do this?

- **The SDGs**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to "transform our world by 2030." Gender equality and women's empowerment feature as a stand-alone goal (SDG5) and are integrated through many of the other goals (e.g., SDG1, 3, 5, 10, 11). By 2030, the SDGs aim to ensure that "every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality" (paragraph 15) through ambitious and comprehensive targets missed in the Millennium Development Goals. The IGAD Strategy highlights its commitment to achieve all these goals through interventions that accelerate structural transformations for gender equality through the various program areas in its land, environment, natural resources, and agriculture division; health and social affairs; trade and economic integration as well as peace and security division. This commitment will also be shared across IGADs specialized areas and technical offices. A lot of the gender related interventions in these sectors will contribute to specific sector SDG goals as well as other goals including Goal 10 on reducing inequalities.

- **Agenda 2063 of the African Union**

Aspiration 6 of the AU Agenda 2063 calls for "An Africa, whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children."¹ Agenda 2063 therefore requires that we live in a more inclusive society where all citizens are actively involved in decision making in all aspects and where no child, woman or man is left behind or excluded, on the basis of gender, political affiliation, religion, ethnic affiliation, locality, age or other factors. Article 3 of the Protocol on Amendments of the Constitutive Act of the African Union recognizes the critical role of women in promoting inclusive development and calls for the AU "to ensure the effective participation of women in decision-making, particularly in the political, economic and socio-cultural areas."²

The AU Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa gives mandate to Regional Economic Communities to provide technical guidance to the Member States, monitor land sector progress, and promote regional land policy harmonization, and women's land rights.³ The same Declaration gives mandate to Member States to promote land sector interventions that tackle underlying causes of tenure insecurity including through securing and protecting all tenure rights, increasing transparency in land administration, and promoting equal access to land for all land users including women. As follow up, IGAD has spearheaded the development of The IGAD Regional Women's Land Rights Agenda together with an IGAD Land Governance Business Plan 2020-2030 which is intended to deepen convergence in programing for women's

¹ Agenda 2063. https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/33126-doc-framework_document_book.pdf

² Constitutive Act of the African Union. https://au.int/sites/default/files/pages/34873-file-constitutiveact_en.pdf

³ Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa: <https://au.int/en/documents/20110131/framework-and-guidelines-land-policy-africa>

land rights as well as enhance gender mainstreaming in the land sector across the IGAD Region.

AU Agenda 2063 and Gender Equality Commitments:

1. By 2063, all forms of violence and discrimination (social, economic, political) against women and girls would have been eliminated and they would fully enjoy all their human rights. This means an end to all harmful social practices and that all barriers to access to quality health and education for women and girls would be non-existent.
2. The Africa of 2063 would see fully empowered women with equal access and opportunity in all spheres of life. This means that the African woman would have equal economic rights, including the rights to own and inherit property, sign a contract, register, and manage a business. Over 90% of rural women would have access to productive assets, including land, credit, inputs, and financial services.
3. The Africa of 2063 would see attainment of full gender parity. It would see women occupy 50% of elected offices at state, regional and local bodies, and 50% of managerial positions in government and private sector would be women. The economic and political glass ceiling hindering women's progress would finally have been broken.

1.4 The Central Role of Member States

The scope and success of the Gender Equality Strategy in IGAD as well as resources and instruments to be used in its implementation will largely depend on the Member States, and their political will for the implementation of strategy. Against this backdrop, the underlying approach for the development of this strategy recognizes the importance of engaging Member States in the drafting process of this strategy. The sense of ownership among Member States, national apex women organizations and machineries, civil society organizations, local governments, and development partners at national level contribute to the development of political will and availing required resources necessary for the implementation of the strategy.

Member States have also made international and regional commitments including ratifying and domesticating global and regional instruments providing a conducive legal and policy environment for the implementation of the Strategy. IGAD will continue to depend on the prevailing conditions in the Member States, on the effectiveness of the National Focal Points System in communicating the requirements of the IGAD Secretariat to national implementing institutions and vice versa. In summary, national ministries, agencies/authorities, national gender policies and laws, regulations, academic institutions, and civil society actors at country level will be mobilized and sensitized on their roles and responsibilities for a holistic approach to the implementation of the strategy.

1.5 The IGAD Gender Policy

Promotion of Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE) is underscored as a critical imperative for fostering resilience, regional integration, and peace for sustainable development in the IGAD Region. To this end, gender is identified as one of the priority cross-cutting policy theme to be mainstreamed in all institutional structures, instruments, programs, and undertakings at all levels. A specific Gender Policy Framework for IGAD is in place to institutionalize the principle of gender mainstreaming (GM) and in effect, address GEWE through de-

sign, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation with specific targeted interventions to address critical gender issues in the region within the framework of IGAD's mandate and service delivery mechanisms. At the organization level, this policy framework articulates the role of the IGAD-Gender Affairs Department, specific organization policies such as the IGAD Sexual Harassment Policy, promotion of women's participation in all levels of decision making and gender mainstreaming across IGAD programs and projects.



CHAPTER 2

THE IGAD REGIONAL CONTEXT

CHAPTER 2: THE IGAD REGIONAL CONTEXT

2. A Landscape Analysis

Economic integration and Peace & Security are the key IGAD thematic areas that continue to shape its role, vision, and development in the region. Not only are they the two explicit objectives of IGAD, they are potentially also mutually dependent (IGAD, 2010).⁵ Peace and security is arguably a pre-condition for increased regional market integration, while increased regional economic integration promotes mutual economic dependence between states and may itself engender peace by heightening the opportunity cost of conflict. The two are also important for addressing other regional challenges such as those relating to food security, gender equality and the effects of climate change⁴.

Peace and Security: IGAD is also a ‘building bloc’ of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), with conflict prevention, management and resolution, trans-national security threats, cooperation and coordination in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and governance rule of law, democracy and human rights as its main program areas which are implemented by its programmes and specialized offices. It hosts one of Africa’s most elaborate conflict early warning systems and is widely recognized for its role in conflict mediation, particularly in negotiating Sudan’s Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 and the subsequent referendum, the peace process of Somalia since 2008 and the mediation of the South Sudan internal conflict since 2014.

Democracy and Governance: In the period between January 2021 and December 2025, several countries in the IGAD Region will either hold presidential and parliamentary elections or they have already held both these elections – Uganda, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, South Sudan, and Sudan. While the political landscape varies in each country, there are several cross-cutting issues which manifest with varying impact across the region. In Somalia, women acquired 14% of the seats in 2012 which increased to 24% in 2016, before a sharp decline to 20% in 2021-2022 in the House of the People (Lower House). The presence of women in the Senate (Upper House) in 2021-2022 however increased by 2% to 26% (Heritage Institute, 2022). Kenya shares a similar story with 30- elected female MPs, up from 23 in 2017, seven female governors, up from three in 2017, and three female senators, the same number as in 2017⁵. Uganda which has the oldest established system of reserved seats for women among in Africa⁶, women now hold 46% of local government positions, 33% of parliamentary seats and 43% of the cabinet positions as of 2021⁷.

Economic integration: Although IGAD has a large focus on peace and security, it is also an AU-recognized Regional Economic Community (REC) and building block of the African Economic Community (AEC) under the AEC Treaty. This entails commitments to establishing a Free Trade Area (FTA), macro-economic convergence, industrial development and investment promotion, infrastructure and transport development, information technology, tourism development, and the development of energy, agriculture, environment, and natural resources (Abdi and Seid, 2013). As such, economic cooperation and integration is one of IGAD’s three priority areas, while market integration also supports the third pillar of work on food security and environmental protection⁸.

Drought and Climate Change: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) identified IGAD region as one of the most vulnerable regions of the world to climate variability and change. The region has experienced increased frequency of droughts since the beginning of 21st century attributed to effects of climate change with IGAD region currently facing the worst

⁴ The Political Economy of Regional Integration in Africa, IGAD 2016

⁵ The National Gender and Equality Commission

⁶ Source: The Role of Electoral Systems on the Participation of Women in African Politics: Lessons from Uganda, Tanzania, and Ghana Elections, KIPRA 2021

⁷ The Conversation Newsletter, July 2021.

⁸ World Bank Report 2014

and most prolonged drought in 40 years⁹. According to ICPALD, approximately 75 percent of livestock deaths in the region are attributed to severe drought which has repeatedly left herders and their families destitute. The livestock production is both a driver of, and vulnerable to climate change and broader sustainability challenges. In addition, challenges such as deforestation and poor agricultural practices lead to reduced water retention capacities, surface run-offs, and soil cover losses. Such activities, not only impact negatively on food, water resources, the environment and other ecosystems that serve as community livelihood sources, but also increase their vulnerability to droughts.

Beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic: In the period up to July 2022, IGAD reached over 1.6 million people in the seven Member States, delivered more than 8 million Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) s as well as COVID-19 test kits, PCR machines, ambulances, mobile laboratories, and field vehicles to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak in remote and hard-to-reach areas. Beyond the health sector however, IGAD remained committed to mitigate the impact of the pandemic in the IGAD region with interventions in trade that ensure that critical supply chains remain safe for trade; and in local communities by promoting community engagement and gender-based violence prevention through risk communications and awareness raising and other measures. Interventions in all these sectors were undertaken through the implementation of more than 450 activities spread across 55 cross-border sites in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. In the post-pandemic period, IGAD will focus on how to be more resilient and sustainable in all its interventions considering all member countries suffered the external shocks of COVID-19 across social protection, migration, public health systems, trade, environment and even jobs.

2.1 Advancing Gender Equality

Gender equality doesn't mean that women and men will become the same, but rather their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they were born female or male. (Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)). IGAD has nonetheless been engaged in the promotion of women and girls' rights and gender equality. Gender is articulated as a cross-cutting theme in all programmes and projects as indicated in the overall IGAD Regional Strategy that also serves as a policy framework to support Gender equality and Women's Empowerment in IGAD.

The first IGAD Gender Policy and Strategy was formulated and launched in 2004, this was later revised and updated into a new Gender Policy Framework for 2012–2020 that subsequently informed the Gender Strategy of 2016-2020 and the IGAD Institutional Gender Policy 2018. The framework focused on 'facilitating the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into IGAD's policies, strategies, programmes, projects and activities to make them gender responsive and to contribute to achieving sustainable socio-economic development in the region'. It also underscored gender inequality as a cross-cutting development challenge in all IGAD's priority areas of interventions, and noted pervasive gender inequalities in access to education, information, employment, credit, land, inputs, and decision-making power in all IGAD Member States.

Two other important regional commitments in IGAD are the Regional Action Plan for Implementation of the UNSCRs 1325 and 1820 on Women Peace and Security, and the Regional Strategy for Representation of Women in Decision-Making Positions. Several countries in IGAD have been fractured by conflict, which make the former commitment commendable. The UNSCRs call for women's full and equal participation in conflict resolution, peacebuilding and peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post conflict reconstruction. It calls for the incorporation of gender perspectives in all peace and security efforts and condemn the use of sexual violence as a tool of war. Other Regional and global frameworks and initiatives on gender equality and women's empowerment further reinforces these instruments.

⁹ IGAD Center for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD)

Similarly, IGAD has developed internal Gender Institutional Technical Documents to guide the work of the Secretariat: The Workplace Gender Policy, Gender Management System Handbook and Customized Gender Mainstreaming Tools/Guidelines. These are informed by international and continental commitments and IGAD member state policies. These documents are accompanied by implementation plans, and monitoring and evaluation indicators. In addition to its own normative standards, IGAD continues to monitor the ratification and adoption of international and continental treaties by its Member States.

2.2 Progress in the last strategy period (2016-2020)

The IGAD Gender Strategy (2016-2020) consisted of a suite of three interrelated documents. The strategy document consisted of the analysis, synthesis and elaboration of critical gender inequalities and women's empowerment challenges and priorities in IGAD region while the implementation plan pulled together all the key activities for implementation during the strategy period. The Gender Mainstreaming Handbook is a toolbox that provides insights on how to mainstream gender in various program areas. In the strategy, three broad operational strategies were identified as the modalities for delivery of the Strategy, summarized as A, B and C – (A) Advocacy and awareness raising; (B) Brokering and partnerships; and (C) Capacity building and knowledge management with an overall goal to support implementation of commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment in Member States; and at regional and international levels. Over the last implementation period, a number of activities were undertaken with remarkable success and each division has been at the forefront of undertaking these. Five (5) key milestones however stand out.

- In the Health and Social Affairs division, IGAD developed an 8-year Strategic Plan (2018-2025) on HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The strategic plan was endorsed by the Health Ministerial Meeting on Regional & Cross Border Health Programmes in Addis Ababa to complement the national strategic plans of the Member States regarding the three diseases. The strategic plan also guided the improvement of health services, particularly with regards to HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria, with a particular focus on cross border and mobile populations, that are more vulnerable to such communicable diseases.
- In Land, Environment, Agriculture and Natural Resources the production of various knowledge products that include the gender and land trainers' guides, gender handbook for land administrators, and gender and land situational analysis; have provided useful tools for learning and capacity development at the regular Gender and resilience share fairs and the women and land Communities of Practice (CoPs) in the region. The share fairs and CoPs have regularly brought together land practitioners in Member States, CSO institutions and academia to share knowledge on some of the most current challenges and developments in the sector within IGAD. The division has also been able to develop a platform for addressing other critical issues around social and environmental impact assessment in the blue economy as well as training women capacities in fisheries.
- In the Peace and Security Division, the IGAD Women Peace and Security Forum (IWPSF) is being revitalized to enable it to continue undertaking its critical role of ensuring effective women participation and integration of gender in peace processes in the region. Efforts to revitalize the IWPSF include the meetings of the IWPSF Board members that were held in January 2021 and in January 2022 where the board members were able to fine tune the ToR and SOP of the IWPSF as well as decisions related to specific interventions under the auspices of IWPSF.
- At the same time, the IGAD Security Sector Program (IGAD SSP) conducted a training to enhance institutional capacities of IGAD Member States in incorporating gender perspectives and women empowerment in security sector development with targeted post-conflict countries, leveraging on their strengths and opportunities in order to improve good governance and civilian oversight. The training brought together various

key and relevant institutions from IGAD Member States including policy/decision makers and practitioners among them being from the criminal justice sector, Ministries of Internal Affairs, Defense and Gender/Women's Affairs, Police, Judiciary, and Attorney General Office.

At the Corporate level, the IGAD Gender department has organized a series of training workshops for staff on Gender & Development to enable them to acquire the basic knowledge to utilize the IGAD existing technical documents to mainstream gender in their day-to-day activities and to improve gender responsiveness of IGAD programs, policies and administrative practices. A total of 105 core staff from the Secretariat and Specialized Offices were trained in total, equipping them with basic knowledge about gender mainstreaming concepts and practices. In addition, sector specific gender mainstreaming training workshops were held for the Economic Cooperation and Social Development (ECSD) in June 2016 and Peace and Security Division in May 2018. In total, all the workshops also included 27 participants from relevant Ministries/Departments/Agencies from Member States.

2.2.1 Lessons Learned and Challenges

The Gender Equality Strategy 2023 -2030 builds on the progress and lessons of the previous strategy and draws on insights from assessments and evaluations. The strategy responds to several key lessons.

- i) **Gender Gaps in design of projects:** Across IGAD, most of the project proposals have failed to undertake gender scrutiny at the design stage hence do not highlight how closing of key gender gaps in various sectors can be specifically met once the projects and programs are rolled out. In many cases, even when the gaps are identified, they are limited to restating what already exists at the country level without a more nuanced understanding of what are the key constraints that need to be addressed to facilitate progress at scale.
- i) **Low support across divisions and resistance by program leaders:** Within IGAD itself, like in many transforming organizations the pursuit of gender equality is difficult to implement because of long held cultural biases, denial and misunderstandings of causes of gender inequality by many program managers and frontline staff in general. This eventually leads to a lack of commitment and inclusivity in addressing gender programming. Since resistance seems to be an intrinsic part of the gender equality change, understanding its dynamics is necessary to support transformational change. In part, this was a result of low awareness and ownership of the gender strategy which made implementation challenging.
- ii) **Capacity of the gender department remains low:** Over the last strategy period, there was overwhelming consensus that the role of gender units as a vehicle for accelerating gender mainstreaming is extremely important and possible. However, for the unit to be effective across all the many programs, divisions, and specialized offices in IGAD, there is need to increase its capacity and resources in ways that match the need for gender mainstreaming within IGAD.
- iii) **Lack of a regional data sharing protocol and inadequate monitoring:** Across many divisions and even at member state level, data collection remains a challenging aspect of M&E as well as reporting and communications. The absence of a macro-level regional data sharing protocol or explicit data protection laws and harmonized frameworks currently limits easy and efficient data sharing, both within and across borders.



CHAPTER 3

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

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The IGAD Corporate Strategy anchors the strategic priorities for Gender Mainstreaming and Women’s Empowerment. Within this framework, this strategy prioritizes seven (7) strategic results:

1. Increase women’s participation in sustainable management of natural resources, resilience building, food, and nutrition security.
2. Advance gender equality in regional trade and economic integration
3. Increase equitable access to health and basic social services for gender transformation.
4. Increase the meaningful participation of women in peace building and conflict management at all levels of decision-making and protect women living in situations of conflict.
5. Promote measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in governance and decision-making at all levels.
6. Advance efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking, sexual exploitation, and all other forms of exploitation.
7. Strengthen IGAD’s institutional capacity for leadership and coordination of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment interventions.

3.1 Priority 1: Increase women’s participation in sustainable management of natural resources, resilience building, food, and nutrition security

IGAD recognizes that persistent inequalities between women and men are a major obstacle to agriculture, food, and nutrition security in the region and that eliminating these disparities is essential to building sustainable and inclusive food systems, resilient and sustainable natural resources management. Agriculture remains a major contributor to GDP in the IGAD region ranging from 4% in Djibouti to 5.03% in Sudan, 10.4% in South Sudan, 21.17% in Kenya, 24.06% in Uganda, 37.64% in Ethiopia and 75% in Somalia due to its overwhelming reliance on the livestock trade¹⁰. However, food insecurity remains high in the region. Countries in the region continued to grapple with severe food crisis in 2022, with over 55 million people facing acute hunger and requiring urgent food, nutrition, and livelihood assistance, an increase of over 13 million from 2021¹¹. whereas the role and contribution of women to the agriculture sector ranges from 70 – 80 percent on average, women have less access to and control over productive resources like land and all types of agricultural inputs, with the most pronounced disparity seen in the land. Low access to technologies and education opportunities on sustainable management of land resources among women however mean their contribution to land degradation remain very high.

As farmers, agricultural workers, food processors, traders, entrepreneurs and community leaders, women play a central role in rural economies, natural resource management and food production and they make significant contributions to food and nutrition security, and the well-being of families and communities. Women’s contribution in these rural economies however continue to be undermined by weak women’s property rights under communal land ownership where these rights are not properly defined and are thus complex to attain. Customary law, which governs most community lands in the region, continues to discriminate against women and limits their land and property rights¹².

¹⁰ Source: World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files, 2022

¹¹ IGAD Regional Focus of the Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC) 2023.

¹² Source: Gender Assessment of The Land Sector – IGAD Countries Report, 2020

Among the pastoralist communities in the region however, management of animal herds both in terms of types of animals of different sex and ages, as well as types of livestock (e.g., cattle, sheep, goats, camels, llamas) continue to remain a challenge. Though pastoralists have always managed their herds, the diversification of livestock types has increased in recent years as it has become riskier to depend on one livestock type due to increased incidences of drought, variable rangeland quality and quantity, market accessibility and demand, and other factors (Catley et al, 2013). The patterns of change in pastoral areas are complex and non-linear, with a mix of ‘push and pull’ factors driving sedentarization and diversification (see Livingstone and Ruhindi in Catley et al, 2013). These changes make herd management more complex and will likely mean a greater role for women and children to share responsibilities with men as high levels of livestock diversification require flexible arrangements in family and homestead composition, and spatially extensive social networks to accommodate the different grazing needs at different times of the year (IFAD, 2018b).

Currently, the pastoral and agro-pastoral production livelihood system in the ASALs is increasingly experiencing climate extremes and harsh environmental circumstances. Most parts of ASALs experience one primary agricultural season, and at the end of this sole rainy season, pastoral communities move herds in search of water and grass. But resource scarcity induced by climate changes fuel insecurity as communities’ resort to conflict as a coping mechanism for extreme weather changes. The implications of all these dynamics mean increasing vulnerability of women and girls as climate change impacts and disasters make their traditional domestic duties and livelihood activities more difficult. Women’s reliance on agriculture and natural resources for their unpaid production and care activities makes them particularly vulnerable to climate fluctuations.

Strategic Actions

Subsequently, the priority actions under this outcome area will include the following:

- o The IGAD Gender Department will support the Land, Environment and Natural Resources Division to design and implement gender-responsive and transformative programmes: Ensuring that women have equal access to key agricultural resources, such as land, water, livestock, equipment, seeds, and fertilizers, is pivotal to enhancing their productive and entrepreneurial capacity. This outcome area therefore aims to ensure that women and men have equal rights and entitlements to resources for example, land ownership and inheritance rights and equal opportunities to purchase, own and use them. As agricultural and livestock services are instrumental to accessing resources and information, IGAD will be implicitly recognizing the importance of improving their availability and tailoring them to women’s priorities.
- o Increasing women’s access to and control over productive resources especially land: Beyond increasing their productive and entrepreneurial capacity and enhancing women’s control over resources, is essential to ensure that they can reap the benefits of their work in agriculture and have more control over resources. This transformation will also be complemented by engaging with men and boys and getting them to work alongside women and girls, raising their awareness that improving women’s status yields benefits for the whole community. Priority actions under this result will include addressing gender and social norms affecting land ownership and accessibility, promoting information dissemination on land as well as supporting the devolvement and implementation of gender responsive land laws and policies.
- o Developing gender-responsive value chains: When women, including young women and women with disabilities are linked to agricultural and livestock value chains or market systems from production all the way to processing and marketing, they help make traditional farming more productive and commercially viable. Inclusive value chains also offer work opportunities for women and men off the farm. IGAD will continue to support the formation of women farmer groups, linking them to financial institutions and continue to provide capacity building for women in micro- and small enterprises on value

addition, marketing, training on financial literacy for women in pastoralist communities, leadership, and innovation.

- Increasing women's participation in sustainable management of natural resources: Rangelands and other natural resources are not only beneficial for their productive potential but also as invaluable assets to ensure the health of ecosystems. Among pastoralists, strategic actions under this outcome will recognize that changing systems of tenure following privatization in the rangelands of the Horn of Africa are known to be adversely impacting women, with women missing out on formal titles, and fences and barriers forcing them to walk further to access resources, whilst the breakdown of communal support systems leave them highly vulnerable (Flintan, 2011). This will require promoting interventions such as participatory pastoral unit planning and management practices as well as strengthening collective land and natural resource ownership and management to increase the protection of women's rights.
- Investing in women's access to technologies: Knowledge of farming and livestock keeping techniques is critical to productivity, however women farmers have inadequate access to extension and training services and hence to technologies and access to information. It will therefore be important that training and agricultural technologies are accessible and adapted to rural women's needs and constraints as well to pastoralist or arid and semi-arid area settings.
- Addressing gender issues in climate change adaptation and resilience building: Promotion of initiatives that build women's resilience to climate change and disaster impacts and environmental degradation through greater access to climate-smart technologies, diversified livelihoods, natural asset building, crop and livestock insurance, savings, and other financial safety nets; encourages participation in community-led solutions. This enhances their knowledge, preparedness, and skills and increases access to good practices in climate adaptation and puts to the forefront women's active participation in related decision-making processes at all levels.
- Addressing gender issues in climate change adaptation and resilience building: Partnerships with ICPAC will aim at addressing inequalities which remain the missing link to addressing gender inequalities in Climate Change Adaptation and the provision of Climate Services to all IGAD Member States. For example, women's and girls' health continue to be endangered by climate change and disasters by limiting access to services and health care, as well as increasing risks related to maternal and child health. Similarly, gender disparities continue to exist in information, mobility, decision-making, and access to resources and training on climate variability.

3.2 Priority 2: Promoting gender equality in regional cooperation, trade, and economic integration

Free and open trade plays an important role in inclusive economic growth and development. It facilitates access to new markets, while trade liberalization and increased production enable job creation, technological transfers, skills upgrade, knowledge production and innovation, and institutional development. Along with efficient trade policies, these gains can contribute to other development outcomes and support the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly for women's empowerment. However, the nexus between trade and gender is complex and there is by now widespread recognition that trade policies are not gender neutral.

Changes in national and regional trade take place in the context of social and economic institutions which are gender embedded in gender power relations. Women and men in a country are affected by international trade differently based on their economic roles either as wage workers, traders, producers, consumers or even taxpayers. Trade liberalization leads to a change in the production structure which has direct implications for women participating in the economy as workers, producers, and entrepreneurs. Price changes in imported goods resulting

from trade liberalization affect women's well-being as consumers and traders. Tax policy changes to compensate for tariff revenue losses have direct policy implications. All these channels of influence have the potential to reduce or increase gender inequalities in the economy. On the other hand, gender inequalities bear direct implications for countries' trade performance and export competitiveness. As these interactions are context and country specific, it is important to carry out gender impact assessments of trade reform to improve policy response. (Source: UNCTAD 2019)

In the current IGAD corporate strategy, one of the regional priorities is the pursuit of unification of the regional market and expansion in infrastructure and connectivity with the aim of realizing a single market that is open to competitive entry and is well integrated into the continental and global economies. This requires both regional infrastructures as well as the gradual harmonization of policies for the removal of barriers to interstate communications. Women as entrepreneurs can benefit from new opportunities under increased trade to the extent that they have capacity to participate in export markets. On the other hand, gender inequalities affect a country's export competitiveness and trade performance. For example, unequal distribution of resources, limited access to information and markets and inequalities to education and training put women at a disadvantage. Inequalities in the access to resources and training often mean women lack the necessary skills to climb up regional and global value chains and have less access to higher value-added segments of production.

Certainly, regional cooperation and economic integration presents tremendous opportunities for export-led growth and creation of jobs in the IGAD region. However, gains for women will not be automatic. There are many challenges that limit the participation of women small-scale traders, as well as women-owned micro, small and medium-sized businesses, and larger, women-owned exporting firms in intraregional trade. A major disadvantage for example is that most of these businesses could miss out on opportunities that arise from regional trade integration because they are mostly informal, have low productivity and are confined to non-tradeable sectors, in low-value-added nodes of regional and global value chains. Both supply-side constraints and border obstacles (tariff and non-tariff) restrict the capacity of women small-scale traders and entrepreneurs to produce and sell products, and to expand their businesses to trade across key sectors.

A survey undertaken by UN Women in 2019 for the AfCFTA showed that while some of these constraints are experienced across all categories of women, the exact nature of the barriers that impede women's ability to benefit from intraregional trade differs. For example, health-related risks due to a lack of adequate sanitation facilities at border crossings pose a greater challenge for women in small-scale intraregional trade. Conversely, accessing public procurement opportunities presents more of a challenge for women-owned and led micro, small and medium-sized businesses and for larger, women-owned exporting firms surveyed. These and other barriers intersect with social norms, traditional gender roles, and women's unpaid care and domestic work responsibilities to limit women's abilities, opportunities, and participation in trade in general.

Strategic Actions

To address these challenges, the priority actions under this outcome area will include the following:

- o Supporting a gender responsive trade regime: In IGAD, not all Member States have gender responsive trade regimes. Improving economic outcomes for women, especially as small-scale intraregional traders and entrepreneurs requires awareness and understanding and addressing the underlying structural barriers, as well as discriminatory laws, policies, and practices that they confront. A more informed understanding of the exact nature of barriers is essential to inform the design and implementation of gender-responsive policy reforms in IGAD and complementary measures to grow women-led businesses and gender-responsive businesses. This action area will therefore focus on undertaking a gender-sensitive policy analysis related to regional cooperation, trade,

and economic integration to increase the understanding and implementation of trade policies and regulations that build the institutional preconditions to implement gender-sensitive and responsive trade environment.

- Encourage Member States to advance easy mobility and safety of women: Low levels of literacy and lack of information on regulations and procedures in place generally increase women's vulnerability at border points, which means encountering various forms of gender-based violence that includes physical violence and aggression, humiliation, and sexual harassment. It is also the reason why women small-scale intraregional traders are more prone to corruption and remain disproportionately vulnerable to the arbitrary application of existing rules and regulations at border posts. Addressing these bottlenecks will mean a better focus on all hurdles faced by women engaged in formal and informal cross-border trade by addressing measures "Behind the Borders" as well as "At the Borders" and "Beyond the Borders".
- Reducing the non-tariff barriers to cross-border trade: Women intraregional traders as well as women-owned micro, small and medium-sized businesses, and larger, export-oriented firms, confront particularly acute challenges related to trade facilitation. A combination of extensive documentation requirements often issued at centralized locations, unpredictable and complex regulations, and related cumbersome intraregional trade procedures, increase trade costs, and affects women's engagement in export and trading activities. Gender gaps in education have direct implications for women traders' understanding of complex border processes. To address these challenges, this action area will focus on promoting measures that simplify procedures such as single window approaches targeted at women. One-stop shops, hubs or 'single window' approaches provide one entrance for traders to complete formalities that involve several entities, e.g., customs, health department, transport authority etc. They can be either a physical infrastructure or digitized or a combination of both.
- Increasing access to trade-related information and knowledge of market opportunities: Access to trade-related information and market opportunities are important for enhancing the competitiveness and productivity of women-owned businesses that includes expansion into regional and global value chains. Women small-scale intraregional traders struggle in finding information on intraregional trade regulations and procedures. IGAD will support initiatives to address barriers that prevent women-owned businesses access to trade-related information, including on export documentation – certificates of origin, trade permits, sanitary and phytosanitary certificates, rules of origin document requirements – as a distinct constraint. In addition, IGAD will use existing initiatives such as the '50 million women speak' to create a platform for women to speak up about their issues and connect with one another; includes building capacity for women to use ICT platforms, centers of excellence for skilling, empowerment; increase women's capacity in engaging in international trade.
- Strengthening cross-border trader and women's business associations: While playing a crucial role in addressing the plight of traders, intraregional trade associations are often ill equipped to deal with the wide-ranging challenges that confront traders, especially (young) women. Associations typically lack financial resources and are unable to provide the required advocacy, market-driven information, and business support to their members. Strategic actions in this result area will focus on strengthening women's participation in trade associations and/or support female trade associations and/or cooperatives to facilitate access to social and business networks for women while simultaneously increasing opportunities for women to access capital to enable them effectively to participate in trade; women savings associations; government credit facilities; women entrepreneurship funds and working with private sector.

3.3 Priority 3: Increase equitable access to health and basic social services for gender transformation

According to the ILO, in sub-Saharan Africa, over 60 per cent of all working women remain in agriculture, often concentrated in time and labor-intensive activities, which are unpaid or poorly remunerated. Reversing the employment gender gap is a pressing priority. In some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, time-related underemployment for women is as high as 40 or 50 per cent of total employment while women continue working fewer hours in paid employment and still perform the vast majority of unpaid household and care work.

The IGAD State of the Region Report 2020 on the other hand found that most of the indicators on social development improved over the years.¹³ This is attributed to strategies adopted by the Member States. Significant impacts were recorded in poverty reduction from a high of 43% to a low of 15% between 2012 and 2017. This is in addition to improvements registered in the health and education sectors. There has, however, been minimal growth in employment with disproportionately high unemployment rate among the youth of up to 28% compared with overall rates of up to 14%. Deprivation was also disproportionately higher in countries under conflict compared to more stable Member States. (Source: IGAD State of the Region Report 2020).

In Health, IGAD registered positive improvement for select health indicators across all the Member States over the last five years from child mortality, maternal mortality, people living with HIV/AIDS and TB. Overall, however, the performance of the health indicators remained low. Inadequate availability of health facilities and corresponding health personnel has been identified as a major limiting factor for social development among the IGAD Member States with an additional challenge of the COVID 19 pandemic which has so far claimed 23,579 lives with a total of 1,137,125 cases reported.¹⁴ COVID 19 remains a permanent threat in the region with the potential to reverse the gains made in the health sector.

High rate of migration in the region is also a major threat to social development. The international migrant population in the IGAD region grew from 3.1 million in 2010 to 6.5 million in 2019¹⁵, representing a 7.4 percent average annual growth rate. Furthermore, the IGAD region has one of the highest concentrations of forcibly displaced populations in the world. At the end of December 2020, there were 8.9 million conflict-related internally displaced persons, 4.6 million refugees and asylum seekers, and nearly 3 million people who were newly displaced by disasters³. Most of the displacement in the region has been protracted, lasting over an average of 10 years. Even relatively stable countries like Kenya and Uganda have experienced internal displacement of their populations. Forced displacement affects the countries of origin and has spillover effects into the entire or most of the IGAD region, as is the case with the presence of Somali and South Sudanese refugees throughout the region. (Source: IGAD Migration Statistics Report 2021)

In education, IGAD's commitment to the education sector has been accelerated by the Djibouti Declaration on Refugee Education (2017) and its subsequent Action Plan which will provide an Education Framework for national level implementation of the Djibouti Declaration and provide guidance on fulfilling regional and international commitments to education service delivery to vulnerable populations. A key component of IGAD's educational and skills development strategy however has been to develop regional minimum education standards and targets on access and delivery of quality education for pre-primary primary, secondary and higher education, including TVET, to maximize learning outcomes for all, including refugees, returnees, and host communities¹⁶. According to UNHCR, ensuring that displaced girls access their fundamental right to education remains one of the most challenging issues in IGAD region and one of the biggest barriers to girls' education is the lack of financing for programmes that actively support

¹³ IGAD State of the Region Report. <https://igad.int/download/igad-state-of-the-region-report-popular-version/>

¹⁴ Source: WHO COVID 19 Dashboard as of 8:18pm CET, 19 January 2023.

¹⁵ There were 3.1 million (M=1.6 million, F= 1.5 million) migrants in 2010 and 6.5 million (M=3.5 million, F= 3 million) in 2019.

¹⁶ IGAD., E-Readiness of IGAD Member States in the Education Sector in support of the African Union's Continental Education Strategy 2020, A CESA Cluster on ICT Integration Report Produced By Global E-Schools and Community Initiative

their education journeys and opportunities for finishing basic education and accessing post-primary programmes. Post the COVID 19 pandemic, UNHCR estimated that half of all refugee girls were unlikely to return to class when schools fully reopened.

According to UNICEF, girls are often well represented in primary schools from grades 1 to 3, but their participation begins to drop off after that mostly due to constraints such as vulnerability to sexual harassment, menstruation and in some places, expectations of early marriage. As a result, millions of girls end up not continuing to secondary school which ultimately negatively impacts their future potential as well as that of their communities. It is estimated that if all women had a secondary and higher education, the instance of child marriage, infant and maternal mortality would be significantly reduced, and preventable child disease and deaths would be halved¹⁷.

Strategic Actions

To address these challenges, the priority actions under this outcome area will include the following:

- Achieving gender equality at work: Achieving gender equality at work as an essential precondition for realizing sustainable development that leaves no one behind and ensures that the future of work is decent for all women and men will remain a top priority under this priority action area. Undertaking this commitment will be addressed by promoting policies that reduce barriers preventing women from starting and developing their businesses to encourage more women to become entrepreneurs as well as supporting member countries to achieve harmonization between work and family life by recognizing, reducing, and redistributing unpaid care work through the promotion of decent and adequately paid jobs in the care economy.
- Establish a common and sustainable regional approach to supporting women and girls in cross border and mobile populations in the IGAD Member States: Through increasing preventative action, and reducing misconception of cross border and mobile populations, refugees, IDPs, returnees and surrounding host communities concerning HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and mitigation in the IGAD Member States is perhaps one of the biggest challenges to improving maternal and child health in the IGAD region. This priority area will focus on the development and/or implementation of mechanisms for continuity of services across borders including referral systems for women CBMPs in in the region together with a regional strategy for improved HIV, STI prevention, treatment and care services directed to cross-border and mobile populations.
- Promoting gender-responsive adaptation actions that promote, protect, and fulfil the rights of migrants: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), provides the overarching framework for addressing women's human rights in the global compact for safe, orderly, and regular migration. However, there is still needed to ensure a human rights-based and gender-responsive approach to migration governance, which respects the dignity of all migrants throughout all stages of migration, and protects their rights under international law, including the principles of equality and non- discrimination. Priority actions in this area will focus on promoting gender-responsive adaptation actions that promote, protect, and fulfil the rights of migrants, gender equality and the empowerment of all women including women migrants irrespective of their migration status.
- Address financing gaps for programmes that actively support the education journeys of girls and opportunities for completing basic education and accessing post-primary programmes by remaining committed to work with all partners to mobilize collective action with member state governments, development, and private sector partners to innovate and improve the financing of girls' education, from pre-primary to advanced levels. This

¹⁷ UNHCR & UNICEF., A roundtable discussion to deliberate on how to support sustainable financing for countries in Eastern, Southern and Horn of Africa in October 2021

will also be augmented by encouraging the establishment of more affirmative action to increase girls' access to education, including achieving gender parity as well as bridging the technological gap in education.

3.4 Priority 4: Increase the meaningful participation and leadership of women in peace building and conflict management at all levels of decision-making and protect women living in situations of conflict

The internal and external political, economic and social determinants of peace and security in the IGAD region originate from conflicts related to access to natural resources, extreme poverty, income inequality, governance problems, mismatches between performance legitimacy and popular legitimacy, corruption, election-related disputes and violence, radicalization and violent extremism, trans-national security threats and organized criminal activities, as well as migration, smuggling, and human trafficking.

In 2000, the international community recognized the importance of women's participation in creating the conditions for permanent peace when the UN Security Council adopted the landmark resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security, which acknowledged the critical role women, could play in preventing and resolving conflicts, negotiating peace, participating in peacekeeping and in humanitarian response and post-conflict peacebuilding. Among other things, the resolution calls for women to participate fully in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security. The resolution also requires the UN to solicit and consider all viewpoints on gender issues to increase the role of women in all peace and security activities and all parties at war to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse.

IGAD adopted a Regional Action Plan on UNSCRs 1325 & 1820 in 2013 recognizing that four¹⁸ IGAD Member States have National Action Plans in this regard. Internally, IGAD's normative framework on gender equality and women and girls' empowerment is aligned with existing international and continental norms and frameworks. In 2019, IGAD convened its first ever Ministerial meeting to gauge progress towards implementation of commitments to the UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) 1325 and 1820 and subsequent relevant resolutions. During this meeting, the ministers highlighted the need for IGAD to revise the Regional Action plan to accommodate the newly emerging issues in the region, to incorporate more common regional issues as well as for it to be a model for countries that are yet to have National action plans and those that will engage in developing their next generation NAPs.¹⁹

Despite all the progress, the percentage of women in peace talks has stagnated at single digits since the UNSCR 1325 resolution was passed. The results have had a devastating impact on women's lives. Often as targets of extreme forms of violence, women in Africa experience the full impact of violent conflicts in the region as civilians and combatants. However, women's peace building potential has had no significant impact on policies and decision relating to conflicts because of their absence from the decision-making processes and bodies in the region. Priority is rarely given to developing women's individual and collective capacity to address these conflicts and to build stable, peaceful, and democratic institutions in Africa. Women generally remain absent from policy dialogue with government on critical issues for peace and security that have fundamental gender dimensions and implications for sustainable stability. According to UN Women, women constitute fewer than 10% of peace negotiators globally and only 3% of signatories to peace agreements. And because of stereotypical notions of gender, women's participation in war-related work can also be overlooked or hidden away when disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes begin.

As an example, Verveer (in Chang et al. 2015) notes that when the potential contributions that women can make in transitional justice processes is left untapped, they are silenced while so-

¹⁸ Uganda, Kenya, Djibouti, and South Sudan

¹⁹ The Gender Policy Framework for 2012–20

ciety is further disadvantaged in the pursuit of peace and prosperity. Negotiations in post conflict societies tend to look at women's participation and gender equality as secondary to ending the violence, yet as Jamar and Bell (2018) note the two are inextricably linked. The inclusion of women in post conflict transitional justice processes results in a greater uptake of such initiatives and increases the sustainability of the peace process (Paffenholz et al. 2016). The inclusion of women ensures that the gender dynamics of conflict and its impact on women are considered, and opportunities to understand and address multiple forms of gendered harm are made possible. Inclusion also opens spaces to address structural dimensions and root causes of conflict, including gender inequality (Jamar & Bell 2018)²⁰.

The IGAD region is not an exception. The number of women participating in peace negotiations in a variety of official roles is significantly low or non-existent. While there has been advocacy to increase the numbers of women at the table, research indicates that influence and sequencing or timing of participation, and not just presence is critical in affecting the outcomes of the peace agreements and its provisions. How women mobilize outside the formal space, and the opportunities and avenues for transfer have also been noted as key strategy for influence. Mediators have a large role to play in this regard, and guidelines for women's inclusion in peace processes have been developed at the UN level. But participation of women even in peace-keeping, whether in UN or AU peace operations, indicates very low numbers. Overall, regarding the military and higher women's participation, has in turn improved the reporting of sexual assaults.

In the implementation of this strategy, the Gender Department will continue to work with the Peace and Security Division and all its various Specialized Offices and programmes including CEWARN in mainstreaming gender in early warning methods to enhance security and develop peace infrastructure on the regional level. This will be especially important in working directly with CEWARN on improving the gender responsiveness of its field monitoring system that typically includes locally constituted peace committees who work on sourcing real-time early warning information and deploying response initiatives at the sub-national level respectively. Additional interventions will be undertaken in collaboration with the Mediation Support Unit (MSU), ICEPCVE and political affairs among others.

Strategic Actions

To address the challenges of women participation in peace and security, the priority actions under this outcome area will include the following:

- Ensure a sound understanding of regional conflict and peace dynamics: increase regional understanding and appreciation of gender, peace, and conflict dynamics by going beyond documenting practices of discrimination, exclusion, and the gendered impacts of conflict to assess underlying gender dynamics – political and economic power dynamics between men and women within a society – and their links to peace and security.
- Strengthening women's leadership in peace and security: The aim is to maximize the participation and contribution of women in national and regional peace and security decision-making and political dialogue in the IGAD Region through implementation of the IGAD Regional Action Plan on WPS 2023-2030. Specific measures will be implemented to create "security fluency" amongst women leaders, by increasing women's knowledge and ability to converse on peace and security related issues as well as securing a seat at the decision-making table by advocating for inclusion of women in peace negotiations and influencing peace and security policies and practices.
- Revitalize the women, peace and security forum: This will be implemented to build a strong network of women champions on peace and security in the region so that they begin to see themselves as a regional movement on gender, peace, and security, which

²⁰ Sadiyya H., et al. Women and Transitional Justice: Perspectives from the Ground toolkit, November 2020

could reach out to similar movements across the continent. To bring about transformative changes in the sphere of gender, peace and security, priority actions will also take a multi-pronged approach that reaches all the way from individual to international levels, and targets all peace and security ideologies, structures, and processes.

- o Promote national adoption and strengthen capacity to monitor national-level implementation of UNSCR 1325: Monitoring the implementation of the landmark resolution of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda, including through National Action Plans (NAP) to implement the four pillars of the resolution including encouraging Member States aligning with the IGAD Regional Action on Women, Peace and Security and involving civil society, and particularly local women's networks and organizations, on the implementation of UNSCR 1325. The Gender Department will work towards monitoring, documentation, and capacity building of Members States to implement the Regional Action Plan on UNSCR 1325.
- o Advocate for meaningful participation of women constitutional review, electoral and other political processes: Work with the Peace and Security Division's political affairs program to advocate for meaningful participation of women in all stages of the constitutional review, electoral and other political processes including public consultation in all countries with impending elections in the current strategy period.
- o Building the capacity of international observers on SGBV reporting: Building an in-house capacity and the capacity of international observers on SGBV reporting in situations of political and armed conflict, electoral processes, natural disasters, and humanitarian emergencies to increase collective action to protect women and girls from gender-based violence.

3.5 Priority 5: Promote measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in governance and decision-making at all levels

From the local to the global level, women's leadership and political participation are restricted. Women are under-represented as voters, as well as in leading positions, whether in elected offices, the civil service, the private sector, or academia. This occurs despite their proven abilities as leaders and agents of change, and their right to participate equally in democratic governance. Despite evidence of why it is important to have women in decision-making, several factors continue to undermine WPP. These may be divided into two categories. The first are the deep-seated systemic "informal factors" such as custom, culture, tradition, socialization, and gender stereotypes which in their most extreme form are expressed as gender violence. These age-old patriarchal norms will not be eradicated overnight. They result in the constant "one step forwards, two steps backwards" syndrome. The second category of "formal" or more immediate factors is more within our control. This includes the media; electoral systems and election management; finance and resources. (Source: *Women's Political Participation - Africa Barometer 2021. A Publication of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance*)

Women face several obstacles to participating in political life. Structural barriers through discriminatory laws and institutions still limit women's options to run for office. Capacity gaps mean women are less likely than men to have the education, contacts and resources needed to become effective leaders. Individual women have overcome these obstacles with great acclaim, and often to the benefit of society at large.

According to the UN Women, the East and Southern Africa region has the highest representation of women in parliament in sub-Saharan Africa, i.e., 32% as at December 2020. This compared favorably with the global average of 24.5%. In Somalia for example, gender imbalance in political participation, in leadership and decision-making remains a threat to sustained peace and development. Despite commitments to 30% quota for women in the 11th Parliamentary elections (2021-2022), the women's representation stands low at 20% in House of the People,

lower than the 2016 figure of 24%. In three other countries, the representation of women in the legislature remains below 30%. These include Kenya at 23%, Djibouti at 26% and Sudan at 28%. In three additional countries however, the numbers are above 30% with South Sudan at 32% and only Uganda at 34% and Ethiopia at 41% above the 33% international threshold for women's representation in legislative bodies. (Source: World Bank Open Data Portal on Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%) in 2022).

Equality in political decision-making performs a leverage function without which it is highly unlikely that a real integration of the equality dimension in government policymaking is feasible. In this respect, women's equal participation in political life plays a pivotal role in the general process of the advancement of women. Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be considered. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved.

Even within the IGAD region, women have demonstrated considerable leadership in community and informal organizations, as well as in public office. But socialization and negative stereotyping of women and men, including stereotyping through the media, reinforces the tendency for political decision-making to remain the domain of men. Likewise, the underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions in the areas of art, culture, sports, the media, education, religion, and the law have prevented women from having a significant impact on many key institutions.

Strategic Actions

To address the challenges to women's equal access to and full participation in governance and decision-making at all levels, the priority actions under this outcome area will include the following:

- Set gender equality targets for government and other administrative committees: Support Member States to commit themselves to establishing and meeting the goals of gender balance in governmental bodies and committees, as well as in public administrative entities, and in the judiciary, including, inter alia, setting specific targets and implementing measures to substantially increase the number of women with a view to achieving equal representation of women and men, if necessary, through positive action, in all governmental and public administration positions.
- Advocate for integration of women in political groups: Advocate for Member States to take measures, including, where appropriate, in electoral systems that encourage political parties to integrate women in elective and non-elective public positions in the same proportion and at the same levels as men.
- Provide capacity building for women participating in politics: Provide capacity building for women political candidates to help build their capacities and offer civic education and sensitization campaigns on gender equality. This will include supporting gender equality advocates in calling on political parties, governments, and others to do their part in empowering women, women with disability, marginalized women and encouraging young men and women to engage in advocacy around making gender equality measures central to public policymaking.
- Strengthen voices for legislative and constitutional reforms to ensure women's fair access to political spheres as voters, candidates, elected officials, and civil service members including the collaboration with all stakeholders including civil society organizations on electoral programmes that uphold women's rights, including to vote and campaign free from electoral violence.

- o Regular collection, analysis, and dissemination of data on women and men in decision making positions: Monitor and evaluate progress in the representation of women through the regular collection, analysis and dissemination of quantitative and qualitative data on women and men at all levels in various decision-making positions in the public and private sectors, and disseminate data on the number of women and men employed at various levels in Governments regularly to ensure that women and men have equal access to the full range of public appointments and set up mechanisms within governmental structures for monitoring progress in this field.

3.6 Priority 6: Advance efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking, sexual exploitation, and all other forms of exploitation

The United Nations defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life." GBV is a complex phenomenon that exists in many different forms and may be experienced within family and intimate relationships, in public spaces and workplaces, and online. Acts of GBV are usually part of a pattern that can affect all aspects of survivors/victims' lives. This includes their access to education, employment, housing, health care and justice, as well as their physical and mental well-being and health. When survivors/victims have children, such impacts may also extend to them. Moreover, GBV has economic ramifications for survivors/victims, their families, and societies.

In the IGAD Region, gender-based violence takes numerous forms: Intimate partner violence, sexual violence, child marriage, female genital mutilation, violence against women and girls in politics, trafficking for sexual exploitation, female infanticide, and 'honour' crimes are common – with intimate partner violence occurring at staggering rates in every country. Girls and women may also experience gender-based violence when they are deprived of nutrition and education. Similarly, armed conflict, natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies can significantly weaken a society's ability to protect women and girls from gender-based violence. Rates of intimate partner violence often increase in crisis settings. Many armed groups also use sexual violence as a tool of warfare to advance military or political aims. All the while, girls and women may be forced to trade sex for food, money, and other resources they need to survive. And in some places, they are married off early or forcefully, to protect or care for their families.

Across the IGAD Region, the stress of climate change is also already being felt. Whereas the commonly spoken-about impacts of climate change are changing weather patterns, heavier rainfalls, prolonged droughts, higher temperatures, increased crop failure, livestock loss and increasing food insecurity, the little spoken-about truth is that the impact of climate change also exacerbates the risk of violence against women. Threats and pressures on the environment and its resources amplify gender inequality and power imbalances in communities and households coping with resource scarcity and societal stress. (Source: IGAD Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources Division)

Eradicating all forms of GBV is a global responsibility. While many governments have enacted policies and programmes to this end, strategic planning, policy co-ordination, and long-term investment in services for GBV have often been uneven, limiting the effectiveness of governmental measures. Governments' insufficient commitments and capacities to implement strategies to eliminate GBV were further exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic which had severe consequences for women in structurally excluded groups, such as sex workers, women with disabilities, refugees, women in rural areas and persons with disability. The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for women and girls may take years to fully measure, but preliminary data suggests that it has significantly limited women's access to GBV services while also increasing GBV prevalence in the region.

In the region, however, many positive steps have been taken to address GBV, much work remains to be done. In Kenya for example, there exists a national policy on prevention and response to GBV. In Ethiopia, the National Policy on Ethiopian Women (1993) is currently under review and aims to institutionalize the political, economic, and social rights of women together with the National Strategy and Action Plan on Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs) against Women and Children (2013). Uganda has a newly launched National Policy for Preventing and Responding to GBV that is survivor-centered, multi-sectoral prevention and response Accountability to Affected Populations as well as a 5-year Inter-agency GBV Strategy for the 2023-2030 period. In Sudan, The Saleema²¹ initiative, launched in 2008 by the National Council of Child Welfare (NCCW) Sudan supports the protection of girls from genital cutting, particularly in the context of efforts to promote collective abandonment of the practice at community level. In South Sudan, the Government of South Sudan produced the South Sudan National Action Plan for implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and Related Resolutions to address the plight of women and girls during conflict and in post-conflict periods.

Strategic Actions

To address the challenges of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), the priority actions under this outcome area will include the following:

- Establishing a regional SGBV Gender Working Group: To prioritize regional and national dialogue including the hosting of an inaugural Regional High-level Conference on Ending Violence Against Women to address the issue of SGBV during and post the COVID-19 pandemic in the region.
- Strengthening an IGAD regional focus on the creation of whole-of-state systems among Member States to prevent and respond to GBV: This will include an emphasis on the importance of developing holistic laws, policies, and strategies; clearly identifying the roles and responsibilities of state actors and relevant stakeholders; and establishing internal and external accountability mechanisms for SGBV. Research has demonstrated that gaps in laws and policies, and in the implementation thereof, continue to persist across the world, hindering efforts to address GBV (OECD, 2019[9]; Hughes, 2017[10]). Uncoordinated responses and institutional fragmentation may not only result in a failure to address GBV but may also generate secondary victimization.
- Creating a governance and service culture that is survivor/victim centered: Provide technical assistance to Member States to create a governance and service culture that is survivor/victim centered. This focus will underscore the importance of building the capacity of service providers; committing to GBV detection and prevention; funding essential services and programming; and engaging men and boys in challenging harmful gender attitudes and behaviors.
- Advancing the case for increased access to justice for survivors/victims of all backgrounds and bringing to justice those who perpetrate GBV: Key elements of these interventions will include supporting Member States to make changes to justice-related services and proceedings that are responsive to the needs and experiences of survivors/victims; sanctioning and rehabilitating perpetrators; and tracking cases to address preventable failings and inadequate responses by the national or even local government justice system.
- Knowledge and evidence generation, peer learning and testing and innovations on SGBV programing: Provide technical assistance to Member States through knowledge and evidence generation, peer learning, in testing and innovation of participatory locally driven approaches to addressing SGBV that involve coordination of multiple sectors,

²¹ Saleema is a word that means whole, healthy in body and mind, unharmed, intact, pristine, and untouched, in a God-given condition.

partners and include complimentary actions to prevent violence before it starts and enhanced services for survivors right at the community levels.

3.7 Priority 7: Strengthen the institutional capacity of IGAD and Member States in leadership and coordination of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment interventions

The responsibility for strengthening IGAD's institutional capacity for GEWE rests in the mandate of the Planning Coordination and Partnerships Division (PCPD) which has an overall mandate to provide strategic guidance and leadership to IGAD's corporate planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation, reporting, and partnership functions of the Organization. The division is also responsible for supporting and coordinating the implementation of IGAD priority programs and projects to ensure that the set goals and objectives of IGAD's vision and mission are realized. However, the capacity of the division to mainstream gender in all its core functions especially in planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting remain weak. A key priority for the division will be to gradually build this capacity and work in closer collaboration with the Gender Affairs Department as well as other IGAD institutions to support the integration of gender dimensions in its project planning and results measurement framework, in alignment with the gender equality objectives set by the IGAD Gender Policy, to systematically plan and measure gender-related results at all levels.

In 2022 IGAD volunteered to rollout the domestication and implementation of the Gender Equality Seal for Public Institutions (GES-Pi) which aims to support IGAD to advance equality between women and men both in its policies and programs and in its working environment, accelerating its contribution to the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda and African Agenda 2063. The GES-Pi provides a road map to identify and support institutional reforms for effectively mainstreaming a gender perspective, increasing institutional effectiveness and impact.

This decision requires IGAD's commitment to equality for all and strongly promotes and advocates for gender equality across the organization's results. Improving gender equality outcomes in IGAD will require utmost commitment of all office leadership and programme accountability levels to ensure gender is incorporated in IGAD interventions as a key programming principle with a range of contextualized measures focused on closing the gender gaps across priority sectors, tailored interventions for Gender equality and women's empowerment. Across IGAD's programming areas, building cross-sectoral synergies will also be crucial for strategically integrating gender in both programmes and operations. This will mean deepening initiatives to increase capacity, skills and awareness of gender mainstreaming tools and approaches, collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and indicators and strengthening monitoring and evaluation of gender results and outcomes which require greater focus across IGAD both at the secretariat level as well as the specialized offices.

At the same time, while IGAD recognizes that the ultimate responsibility for the achievement of gender equality objectives lies with Member countries and their institutions, this strategy will be essential for holding IGAD Secretariat accountable for systematically pursuing them, by integrating gender equality as a priority in its strategic framework and related implementation programs and mechanisms. The Strategy will also be complemented by an Implementation Matrix that will identify priorities in the medium-term and set time-bound outputs, deliverables, and targets to track progress over time.

Strategic Actions

The Regional Gender Equality Strategy emphasizes a holistic approach to gender mainstreaming that translates analysis into action on the ground; with the aim to transform unequal power relations (gender) and the structural causes that sustain these relations. It seeks to effectively execute its mandate to do these through:

- Influencing/advocating for the inclusion of gender responsive goals, strategies, and resources by expanding the evidence base of gender in each sector to support decision making. The Gender Department will work with the planning unit, other divisions and even Member States to support the systematic collection and incorporation of sex-disaggregated data in relevant statistical databases. These sex-disaggregated data will then be analyzed and disseminated through IGAD's knowledge and communication products to expand the evidence base on gender in agriculture, land, natural resource management; peace and security; health and social development as well as regional economic integration to support decision making at sectoral level.
- Building capacities and providing technical inputs on gender mainstreaming in program design, implementation, reporting, and evaluation: This will mean enabling and empower all staff to take on the responsibility to mainstream gender concerns in their work across various divisions and specialized offices. In design of programs and projects, IGAD will encourage the systematic collection and use of sex-disaggregated data in decision making, strategic planning, communication and reporting, resources mobilization and evaluation.
- Inclusion, Participation and Diversity in decision-making to support greater Gender Equality: Currently, IGAD only has three women in its senior management team, far short of the 50:50 parity articulated in its Gender Policy. Improving gender representation in decision-making institutions and processes will remain a core area of focus for progressive growth to ensure that the IGAD workforce at all levels also reflects the diversity of the societies it serves as this can help lead to more responsive actions.
- Creating an enabling environment for promoting gender equality: Creating the enabling environment will encompass influencing transformational changes in the basic values and beliefs that are dominant in IGAD on gender, changes in the rules and regulations that lead to certain working results as well as development or implementation of gender related workplace policies. However, because processes of change within institutions occur continuously due to their changing environment, the gender department will seek to influence the adoption of new and innovative incentives for change such as creating accountability mechanisms that reward achievement of gender equality commitments through a shared results framework across IGAD.
- Strong leadership and engagement on the promotion of gender equality: IGAD will take forward the initial step towards walking the transformative journey of taking part in the Gender Equality Seal program of the UNDP which will aim at bringing about transformative changes to improve the lives of women and girls through policies and services designed for all. The journey of attaining a Gender Equality Seal will enable IGAD to build on its efforts towards building a gender equal organizational culture and a working environment where women and men are fully empowered and involved and have equal chances throughout their careers as well as in its programs, policies, and processes.
- Provide tools and technical resources to guide gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment because implementing gender mainstreaming can sometimes remain a very abstract concept, it will not be enough to simply state that gender mainstreaming needs to be implemented. IGAD will provide persons responsible for gender mainstreaming with methods and tools that offer clear guidance on how to implement gender mainstreaming in practical terms in various fields of activity or sector. The aim of using gender mainstreaming methods and tools will be to shape IGAD's processes and operational workflows in such a way that the results and effects of the organization's work better meet gender equality objectives. The GMS Handbook will be one such tool and will be reinforced by customized gender mainstreaming guidelines, checklists, and SOPs where applicable that identify specific gender issues for different sectors or programs and propose strategies/activities to address them in a holistic manner.



CHAPTER 4: OPERATIONALIZING THE STRATEGY

CHAPTER 4: OPERATIONALIZING THE STRATEGY

4. Strategic approach

In the long run, due to IGAD's structural complexities and broad development mandate, the responsibility for gender equality will rest with the leadership of various divisions, specialized offices, and Member States. All decision-making centers will advance gender equality as a cross-cutting priority. In this context, the Regional Gender Strategy only provides an overarching framework of coherence in priorities and guidance and identifies the pathways that will be used to operationalize the same.

This strategy emphasizes a holistic approach to gender mainstreaming, translating analysis into action on the ground, aimed at transforming unequal gender power relations and the structural causes sustaining these relations. It seeks to effectively equip this mandate through influencing/advocating for the inclusion of gender responsive goals, strategies, and resources; building capacities and providing technical inputs on gender mainstreaming during the program design, implementation, reporting, and evaluation phases; and creating accountability mechanisms for gender equality commitments. IGAD will still work in close collaboration with Member States and a wide range of partners, including other UN agencies, civil society organizations, research institutions, and the private sector to advance these gender equality objectives. The Organization will adopt a twin-tracked strategy for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment:

Gender mainstreaming: IGAD will ensure that its normative and technical work systematically integrates a gender perspective and responds to the different needs, interests, and capacities of women and men. IGAD will also consider other social dimensions that intersect with gender (such as age, marital status, disability status, religion, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, etc.) and can create and reinforce inequalities, not only between women and men but also among women and among men.

Women's Empowerment: When the gender gap is particularly wide, IGAD will implement programmes and projects that specifically target women and/or focus on the promotion of gender equality as their main objective. However, in all cases, IGAD will adopt integrated and gender-transformative approaches. These approaches will consider the differing needs of women and men and actively seek to redress unequal power dynamics by challenging the discriminatory social norms, behaviors, and attitudes at the root of persistent gender inequalities.

The dual approach for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment will be implemented through four key pathways:

(i) Addressing gender norms and barriers

The most significant issue in the region is the prevalence of harmful gender norms and cultural barriers that hinder the advancement of gender equality. Whenever possible, IGAD will invest in research to unpack underlying gender norms, understand their regional and country-specific impacts, and how they affect the achievement of gender equality results. Evidence thus generated will be used to develop practical programming strategies to address gender norms in a systematic manner (including through cross-sectoral programming) to integrate this into specific programme/project strategies.

(ii) Addressing gender issues at system, legal and policy level

IGAD will use its leadership position and influence to advocate for incorporating gender issues at system, legal, and policy levels. The secretariat and all specialized offices will be required to utilize their technical and policy advisory role to support member countries to develop gender responsive policy and legal policy frameworks. IGAD will also encourage the documentation of good practices, as well as generating advocacy material/policy briefs to support these efforts. Additionally, partnerships with other inter-governmental regional platforms will be leveraged for the same.

(iii) Engaging men and boys

Promotion of mutually empowering relationships between girls and boys in both the public and private spheres, will be a key dimension of IGAD's work methods. Men and boys can be powerful allies in the achievement of gender equality. Interventions such as positive gender socialization, challenging toxic masculinities, reduction of risk-taking behaviors amongst boys, transformation of male attitudes, roles, and behaviors that promote gender equality are extremely critical. Therefore, it will be important to strengthen the direct involvement of boys and men in programmes that advance their own processes of change and transformation.

(iv) Partnerships and systems for innovation, data, and evidence

IGAD will focus on strengthening its existing partnerships, as well as engaging with others to explore new collaborations to accelerate action towards gender equality. As a result, further investments will be made for commitments in strengthening systems for innovation, data, and evidence. Collection of sex-disaggregated data will be prioritized across sectors, and tracking of gender results improved through the inclusion of gender sensitive indicators and where gaps exist, opportunities for data and information sharing agreements will be explored with other development actors. A deliberate effort will be undertaken to motivate stakeholders to address gender data gaps and invest in systems that enhance the tracking and reporting of outcomes for women and girls, aligning with the SDGs framework.

A FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING PROGRESS

Priority Area	Strategic Actions	Milestone 1	Milestone 2	Milestone 3
<p>Priority 1: Enhance gender equality in the sustainable management of natural resources, resilience building, food and nutrition security.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing women’s access to and control over productive resources especially land. • Developing gender-responsive value chains. • Gender equality in the sustainable management of natural resources. • Investing in women’s access to technologies. • Addressing gender issues in climate change adaptation and resilience building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of gender-responsive and transformative interventions in land, technology transfer, NRM and climate resilience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of various gender-responsive and transformative tools, processes, capacities and knowledge in land, technology transfer, NRM and climate resilience interventions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in women and men’s rights and entitlements to resources – for example, land ownership and inheritance rights, access to technologies etc.

Priority 2: Promoting gender equality in regional cooperation, trade and economic integration.

- Supporting a gender responsive trade regime.
- Encourage Member States to advance easy mobility and safety of women.
- Reducing the non-tariff barriers to cross-border trade.
- Increasing access to trade-related information and knowledge of market opportunities.
- Strengthening cross-border trader and women's business associations.

- Gender profiles on the state of women, regional and cross-border trade in the IGAD region.

- Collation of relevant trade-related information and knowledge of market opportunities for women in the region.

- Cross-border traders and women's business associations utilize the available trade related information and knowledge.

<p>Priority 3: Increase equitable access to health and basic social services to improve productivity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving gender equality at work. • Supporting women and girls in cross border and mobile populations in the IGAD Member States. • Promoting gender-responsive adaptation actions that promote, protect and fulfil the rights of migrants, gender equality. • Address financing gaps for programmes that actively support the education journeys of girls. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a portfolio of interventions to address gender in health and services among cross border populations, equality at work, and education of girls. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rollout of a host of program interventions addressing decent work for all, and across health and social services among cross border populations, implementation of the Djibouti Declaration on Refugee Education (2017) and its subsequent Action Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive improvements for select health indicators across all the Member States over the last five years from child mortality, maternal mortality, people living with HIV/AIDS and TB among CBPs, in labour and education for girls.
<p>Priority 4: Increase the effective participation and leadership of women in peace building and conflict management at all levels of decision-making and protect women living in situations of conflict.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a sound understanding of regional conflict and peace dynamics. • Strengthening women’s leadership in peace and security. • Strengthen the revitalize women peace and security forum and build a strong network of women champions on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity and understanding of the extent to which measures to protect women’s and girls’ human rights are included in national security policy frameworks. • Mid-term review of the Regional Action Plan on WPS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased availability of information on violations of women and girls’ human rights among Member States in their periodic reporting on women, peace and security issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the end of 2030 increased information is available and capacity on WPS is in place. • National laws and policies protect women’s and girls’ human rights in conflict in line with international standards.

	<p>peace and security in the region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote national adoption and strengthen capacity to monitor national-level implementation of UNSCR 1325.• Work with the political affairs department to advocate for meaningful participation of women.• Building the capacity of international observers on SGBV reporting.• Measures to protect women's and girls' human rights enforced and implemented by national security policy frameworks.			
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Priority 5:

Promote measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in governance and decision-making at all levels.

- Support Member States to commit themselves to establishing and meeting the goals of gender balance in public entities.
- Advocate for integration of women in elective and non-elective public positions.
- Provide capacity building for women political candidates.
- Strengthen voices for legislative and constitutional reforms to ensure women's fair access to political spheres.
- Regular collection, analysis and dissemination of data on women and men in decision making positions.

- All IGAD Member States commit themselves to establishing and meeting the goals of gender balance in public entities.

- Increased proportion of seats held by women in (a) national legislatures and (b) local governments.
- Stronger public voices for legislative and constitutional reforms to ensure women's fair access to political spheres.

- A majority of countries have legal frameworks in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex.

Priority 6:

Advance efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

- Establishing a regional SGBV Gender Working Party.
- Strengthening an IGAD regional focus on the creation of whole-of-state systems among Member States to prevent and respond to GBV.
- Provide technical assistance to create a governance and service culture that is survivor/victim centered.
- Advancing the case for increased access to justice for survivors/victims of all backgrounds.
- Knowledge and evidence generation, peer learning and testing and innovations on SGBV programming.

- Strengthen or establish national and regional coordination mechanisms on SGBV.

- Member States strengthen existing SGBV prevention and response (protection) mechanisms.

- Improve reporting on SGBV prevention, protection, and response.

<p>Priority 7: Strengthen IGAD's institutional capacity for leadership and coordination of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment interventions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influencing/advocating for the inclusion of gender responsive goals, strategies and resources. • Building capacities and providing technical inputs on gender mainstreaming. • Inclusion, Participation and Diversity in decision making to Support greater Gender Equality. • Creating an enabling environment for promoting gender equality. • Strong leadership and engagement on the promotion of gender equality. • Provide tools and technical resources to guide gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various IGAD divisions and directorates sector specific strategies indicating how they propose to build on various analysis, diagnostics and good practices in addressing gender equality in their operational programmes. • Organization-wide awareness on the process and requirements for the award of the gender seal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on implementation of measures informed by sector and division- level analysis and relevant diagnostics, all IGAD divisions will illustrate the alignment between their interventions and specific objectives met in the gender strategy including the incorporation of specific GEWE results in their results. • All divisions and directorates make significant steps to comply with the requirements for the gender seal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IGAD successfully participates in the process of domesticating the Gender Equality Seal for Public Institutions (GES-Pi) and attain at least a bronze seal in compliance with the required standards. • IGAD makes significant progress in building a gender equal organizational culture where women and men are fully empowered and involved and benefit from its programs, policies and processes. • Increase in number of actions taken to address conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence.
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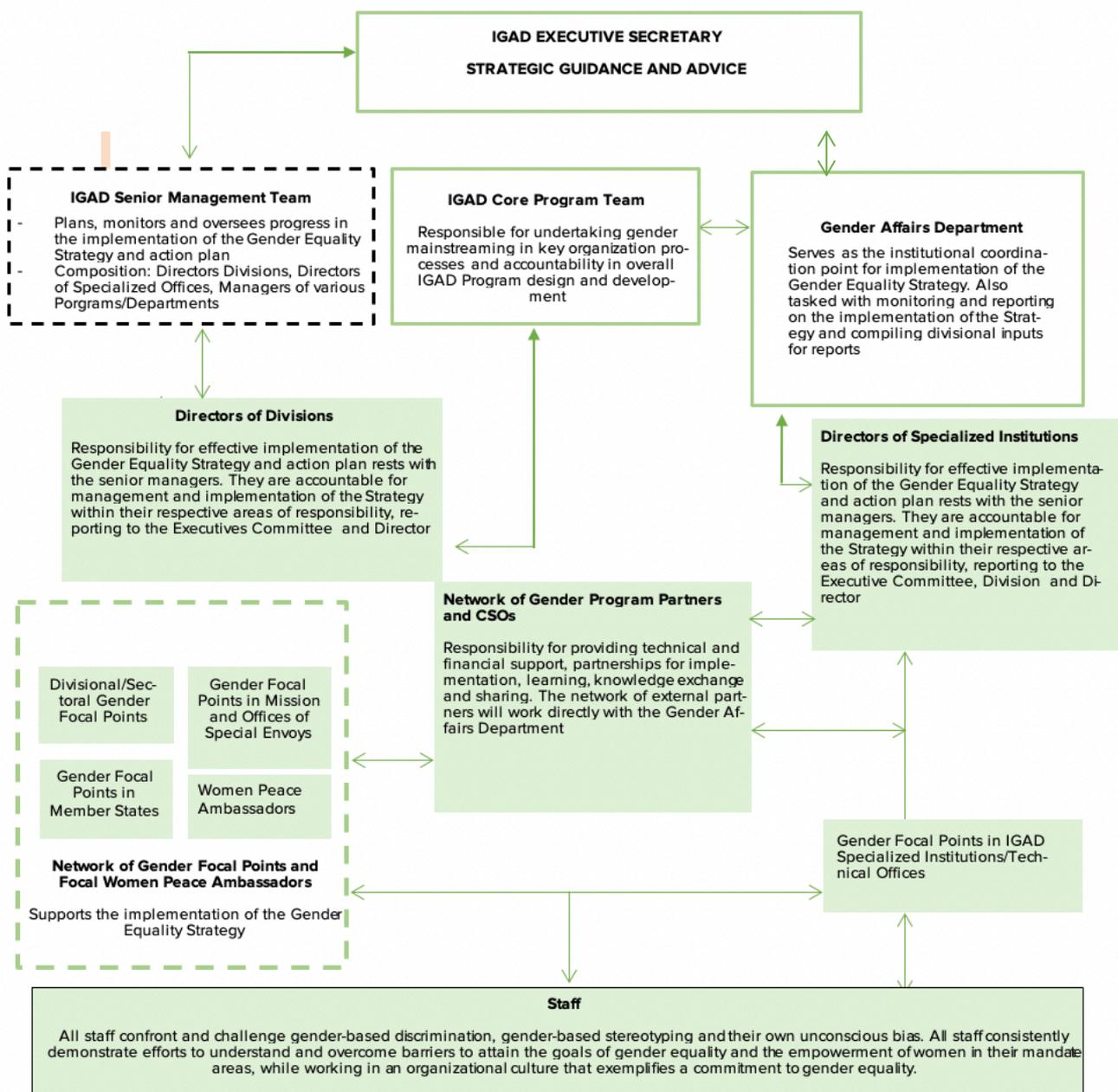


CHAPTER 5: ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING

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One key lesson learned from the past strategy period is that senior management leadership and commitment are instrumental to the achievement of meaningful results of the Gender Strategy. At an organizational level, implementing this strategy will certainly require accountability. Staff at different levels, especially senior managers, are responsible for mainstreaming gender equality and empowering women. At the Member State level, gender focal points, national machineries, ministries, and other state and non-state actors have a dual role. They provide overall political and strategic oversight at the Head of State and Ministerial levels. Simultaneously, they ensure the operational implementation of strategy commitments. This includes resourcing, reporting, and providing the knowledge base for learning and capacity development.

THE IGAD Gender Mainstreaming Architecture



The Implementation Plan which will be the framework for the implementation of the Strategy, will clarify further divisional/sectoral responsibility for gender mainstreaming and achieving the targets for each strategic priority area as well as clarity and division of labour between the secretariat and member state roles and responsibilities.

The IGAD gender mainstreaming architecture will ensure institutional accountability for implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy. This internal monitoring mechanism will be crucial for assessing compliance with the Strategy and will serve as the basis for holding all staff members accountable, for documenting good practices and for monitoring performance. The ultimate responsibility for achieving gender mainstreaming and accomplishing the goals and targets set out in the Strategy will lie with the IGAD Executive Secretary. The Senior Management Team will be the highest decision-making body on gender equality and the empowerment of women within IGAD, with responsibility of monitoring and overseeing progress in implementing the Strategy and reporting to the Executive Secretary.

The SMT is the main institutional mechanism through which the Executive Secretary will build the transformative forms of leadership required to achieve the goals of the Strategy, including through necessary changes to existing structure and practices. The SMT will also define remedial action, such as by issuing guidance and recommendations on the implementation process in areas where sufficient progress has not been achieved.

The Directors will take responsibility for effective implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy and action within their divisions or Specialized Institutions while the Network of Gender Focal Points will be one of the key institutional arrangements for implementing the Strategy. The Network will consist of gender focal points from each Sector/Division/Specialized Office and will assist in the process of gender mainstreaming in activities. However, promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women in IGAD is everyone's responsibility and should not be viewed as the responsibility of the Gender Team or the focal points; their role is to provide coordination and technical support. Detailed tasks for each level of accountability will be outlined in the implementation plan. In addition, the following mechanisms will support IGAD in tracking implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy in a more detailed manner, allowing for the recognition and rewarding of good performance, as well as the highlighting of areas that need additional attention:

Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms

1. Reporting on the implementation of the Strategy will take place annually through the Senior Management Team while each Division Director will report biannually to the SMT on their contributions to the promotion and achievement of results on gender equality and the empowerment of women.
2. The Gender Affairs Department will collate and review reports from the Divisions on a quarterly basis and submit these to the Planning department. A final report will be produced in each quarter for purposes of accountability.
3. At Member State Level, IGAD Secretariat and the Member States will negotiate and develop a reporting framework that enables Member States to abide by the obligations or commitments, where applicable, submit specific reports periodically under the various regional and international human rights treaties, protocols, accords etc.
4. For all other staff, including managers, performance will be monitored by supervisors through regular performance processes and annual performance evaluations. The gender department will however develop indicators to which they will be appraised or evaluated against.
5. Mid-term review and final evaluation: an external mid-term review of progress will be commissioned by the Executive Secretary as part of the overall IGAD mid-term review process or could be done independently. Following that review, modifications may be made to the action plan and implementation of the Strategy, if deemed necessary. A final evaluation will be undertaken towards the end of the last year of the strategy period.

