

IGAD Statement GRF 2023 Mega Pledge on economic inclusion

IGAD is pleased to join the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) 2023 mega pledge on economic inclusion and social protection jointly with Refugees Self-Reliance Initiative and UNHCR.

IGAD has been advocating and continues to advocate for sustainable solutions for refugees, returnees and host communities IGAD region. With over 5 Mio. refugees our member states are hosting the largest number of refugees on the continent. The regional commitment known as the Nairobi Declaration for Durable Solutions and the Kampala Declaration on jobs, livelihood and self-reliance emphasised economic inclusion and self-reliance as one of the priorities for the region.

The two regional declarations and commitments are very much aligned with the mega pledge on economic inclusion and social protection.

The Kampala Declaration further committed IGAD countries to put in place enabling legal and policy environment for economic inclusion such as documentations, access to services such as financial inclusion, right to work and move freely, to mention a few.

The issue of social protection for refugees is further emphasised in the declaration. In IGAD region, the inclusion of refugees in social protection systems is at different stages; some countries have partial inclusion where inclusion at policy level is not operationalised yet due to policy and practice barriers in some countries, like Uganda, refugees are included into national systems. IGAD calls upon donors to support and host governments to provide social protection based on a human rights without discrimination based on refugee status and location.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The regular annual stocking meeting of the Nairobi Declaration allows IGAD and its members to be abreast of the good practices, lessons learnt and challenges in the region on regard to the implementation of commits by our member states on economic inclusion.

The launch of the IGAD Support Platform during the last GRF meeting in 2019 further promotes regionally coordinated approaches.

For this year, IGAD member states have pledged to support durable solutions for refugees, returnees' and host communities in the region. While IGAD member states are in the process of firming up their respective commitments and pledges including those made in 2019, IGAD pledges to support its member states to:

- Strengthen the implementation of existing refugee policies and legal frameworks that address the legal and practical barriers enabling economic inclusion of refugees.
- they further pledge to promote equal access to economic opportunities through ensuring rights on freedom of movement, access to financial services from banks and documentation allowing for permits to engage in self or wage employment.
- And pledge to invest in enhancing access to diverse livelihood opportunities for refugees, returnees' and their hosts to foster self-reliance.
- As well as Adopt existing IGAD Qualification Frameworks as a foundational measure to enhance self-reliance of refugees.

Through it's Support Platform IGAD further pledges to:

- Mobilize partners to develop and implement holistic economic inclusion programs on investment climate reform and private sector investments in refugees hosting and return areas to address refugee's vulnerabilities.
- Generate quality evidence and data responding to knowledge gaps to inform programming and policies for economic inclusion and social protection for refugees, other forcibly displaced people, and host communities.
- Track commitments and pledges made by governments and partners using existing relevant global and regional mechanisms to ensure accountability.