

**United Nations**

**African Union**



**Economic and  
Social Council**

**African  
Union**



**United Nations  
Development Group**



E/ECA/RCM/20/INF2

Distr.: General

23 February 2019

Original: English

---

**Economic Commission for Africa**

**African Union**

Twentieth Session of the  
Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa

Third Joint Meeting of the Regional Coordination  
Mechanism for Africa with the Africa Regional United  
Nations Sustainable Development Group

Marrakech, Morocco, 23 and 24 March, 2019

**Issues paper on the theme: United Nations support to the  
African Union Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally  
Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced  
Displacement in Africa**

## **I. Introduction**

1 At its 31st Ordinary session held in Nouakchott, Mauritania in July 2018, the Assembly of the African Union (AU) declared 2019 the Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa. The year 2019 also marks the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, and the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the 2009 African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention). The African Union contributed significantly to the negotiation and adoption of the Global Compacts on Refugees (GCR) and that on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), adopted by the UN General Assembly respectively, on 17 and 18 December 2018.

2 The Compacts advance the debate and action on wide ranging elements and aspects of forced displacement considerably. The GCR, designed to provide a robust and systematic model to improve the lives of refugees and their host communities, provides a basis for predictable and equitable burden and responsibility-sharing among all United Nations Member States, together with other relevant stakeholders. The GCM - adopted in Marrakech, Morocco on 10 December 2018 by 164 Member States as a non-binding agreement- includes a wide range of commitments and actions embodied in a set of 23 objectives aimed at addressing the numerous challenges associated with unsafe, disorderly, and irregular migration, while also recognizing and respecting a broad range of migrant rights. Both instruments emanated from the September 2016 New York Declaration.

3 Against the foregoing, this paper presents key issues on forced displacement in Africa in keeping with the 2019 AU theme of the year. It is intended to inform the high-level panel discussions on the same at the twentieth session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (RCM-Africa) to be held on 23 and 24 March 2019 in Marrakech, Morocco on the margins of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. The theme of the 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the RCM-Africa is in keeping with the practice of aligning the Mechanism's annual theme with that of the African Union in support of the continental body's annual priority area.

## **II. Overview of the refugee and internally displaced persons situation in Africa**

### ***A. Significance and causal factors***

4 Over a third of the world's forcibly displaced persons are in Africa south of the Sahara, including 6.3 million refugees and asylum seekers and 14.5million IDPs. The numbers increased considerably in 2018, with some 170,000 new refugees and over two million new IDPs - mainly from Ethiopia, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan.

5 While Africa south of the Sahara accounts for only 14 per cent of the world's population, almost half of new conflict displacement took place in the region. There were 5.5 million new displacements associated with conflict and violence in 2017-the last year for which official statistics are available-double the figure for 2016. The Democratic Republic of the Congo was hardest hit in 2017, with almost 2.2 million new displacements, more than twice

the number in 2016, and more than the next three worst-affected countries in the region combined. In Ethiopia, localised conflict drove a wave of internal displacements in 2018.

6 Even though the conflicts in both the Central African Republic and South Sudan exhibit tentative signs of negotiated political solutions with the signing of peace agreements, continuing insecurity continue to consign considerable number of people in forced displacement and to prevent the return of the significant majority of those that have fled the fighting. Elsewhere fighting continued in Cameroon, Mali and the border regions of Burkina Faso and Niger, pushing even more people away from their homes. Burundi remained volatile with continued outflows of people to Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania. Together, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Central African Republic accounted for a total of more than 2.1 million new displacements in 2017. These dramatically increased in 2018 with escalation of displacements in Ethiopia.

7 The causes of forced displacement in Africa are well known and widely acknowledged. Conflict- resulting from among others poor governance, human rights violations and environmental issues are the leading drivers, in addition to social and economic inequalities. The severity of the phenomenon has somewhat been tempered by Africa's impressive tradition of protecting the forcibly displaced. Nevertheless, forced displacement presents serious challenges to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, and the AU Agenda 2063, which consider inclusiveness and the mantra of "leaving no one behind" as central to achieving sustainable development.

8 Climate change is manifesting in among others, the increasing frequency of devastating droughts and resulting severe food insecurity, with the consequence of forced displacement. Both the forcibly displaced and host communities are affected. A combination of conflict and loss of livelihoods attributed to diminishing grazing land and loss of livestock, continues to cause displacement in the Horn of Africa and Sahel region. This fuelled attacks by extremist groups, which triggered displacement in many African countries. Conflict over other natural resources such as precious stones, minerals and oil have also triggered some of the worst violence and largest waves of displacement in the region.

9 In terms of economic inequalities, the 2018 African Economic Outlook projects that African economies have been resilient and gaining momentum. Real output growth is estimated to have increased 3.6 per cent in 2017 and projected to accelerate to 4.1 percent in 2018 and 2019. However, the region's recent appreciable Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates have not been accompanied by corresponding job creation and real increases in wages. Slow job growth has primarily affected women and youth (ages 15–24). Africa is estimated to have had 226 million youth in 2015, a figure projected to increase 42 per cent, to 321 million by 2030. The lack of job growth has retarded poverty reduction. Although the proportion of poor people in Africa declined from 56 per cent in 1990 to 43 per cent in 2012, the absolute number of poor people increased. Inequality also increased, with the Gini coefficient rising from 0.52 in 1993 to 0.56 in 2008 (the latest figure available). Lack of jobs and other livelihood opportunities lead to heightened risks of discontent, social unrest and conflicts that give rise to refugee and IDP situations.

## ***B. Returnees***

10 Most returnees in Africa were former refugees from Nigeria (282,800) who returned to their own country, mainly from Cameroon (150,000) and Niger (132,400). The second-largest number of refugee returns was reported by the Central Africa Republic (78,600), mostly from the Democratic Republic of Congo (33,500), Chad (28,500), and Cameroon (16,500). It should however be noted that the reported statistics refer to returns and not voluntary repatriation.

11 Burundi reported 70,600 refugee returns; the country of asylum from most of these returns was not known (57,400) with 13,100 reported from Tanzania. Additionally, 41,500 nationals of Somalia returned to their country from Kenya (35,400) and Yemen (5,500). Other countries with significant returnees in 2017 were Rwanda (18,100), and Sudan (11,700). More people returned to Libya than were displaced in 2017, but conflict between local militias in several areas of the country still led to about 29,000 new displacements.

12 In former countries of asylum, the largest number of departures was from Cameroon (166,600), mainly to Nigeria (150,000) and CAR (16,500). Other countries reporting large number of departures were Niger (134,600, mostly to Nigeria), the DRC (51,600, to CAR and Rwanda), Chad (38,900, to CAR and Sudan), Kenya (35,400, to Somalia), and Tanzania (13,100, to Burundi). In relation to IDPs, 386,200 Sudanese and 381,800 Nigerians returned to their areas of origins.

13 Continuing fragility in the security situation in many of the countries of return imply returns are not always indicative of durable solutions for displaced populations, who therefore remain at risk of further displacement.

## ***C. Statelessness***

14 The GCR recognizes that statelessness may be both a cause and consequence of refugee movements. International law defines a stateless person as someone ‘who is not considered a national by any State under the operation of its law’. While in theory human rights are premised on the inherent dignity of all individuals, in practice nationality is the precursor to the exercise of many rights; stateless individuals therefore experience a range of human rights violations and severe marginalization.

15 Statelessness is a legal anomaly that can come about from conflicts between, or gaps in, methods of nationality attribution; for administrative or procedural reasons, such as a lack of access to birth registration; from state succession or the transfer of territory; and as a result of gender-based, and other forms of, discrimination. The latter is the main cause of statelessness globally and in Africa. UNHCR reports over 710,000 stateless persons in Africa, though the actual number is likely much higher. African states have recently worked to reduce and prevent statelessness through law reform introducing safeguards to prevent childhood statelessness, improved birth registration and national ID documentation, amending nationality laws to remove gender discrimination and by recognising certain long-staying groups as nationals.

16 The African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (African Charter) does not recognise any right to a nationality. However, the AU, including the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (the African Commission), has done significant work on the issue in recent years. In 2013, the Commission adopted the Resolution on the Right to Nationality,

which among other things requested that African states ‘take the necessary measures to strengthen civil registration services to ensure the prompt registration of the births of all children on their territory, without discrimination’. The following year, the Commission published a major study titled ‘The Right to a Nationality in Africa’ and began work on a protocol to the African Charter on the right to a nationality in Africa. In 2018, the draft Protocol was adopted by the AU’s Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Migration, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons. It will be reviewed by the STC on Legal Affairs in 2019, following which it will be submitted to the AU’s Assembly of Heads of State and Government for adoption.

17 The GCR encourages States, UNHCR and other relevant stakeholders to contribute resources and expertise to support the sharing of good, gender-sensitive practices for the prevention and reduction of statelessness, and the development of, as appropriate, national and regional and international action plans to end statelessness. It urges States that have not yet acceded to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness are encouraged to consider doing so.

#### ***D. Mixed movements***

18 Refugees are a sub-set of large mixed movements that include migrants, which present complex and persistent protection and humanitarian challenges for Africa. Refugees and migrants in the region use three main migration routes: (i) the north-west route converging on the central Mediterranean Sea and crossing into Europe mainly through Libya; (ii) the north-east route transiting Somalia or Djibouti across the Red Sea and converging in Yemen into the Gulf States; and (iii) the southern route into South Africa.

19 Movements from Africa along the northern route through Libya to Europe, the southern route to South Africa, the eastern route to Gulf countries or towards neighbouring African countries are mixed in nature, as most asylum-seekers and refugees, in search of safety, travel alongside and use the same routes as migrants in search of economic opportunity. In response to these flows, EU States have increasingly responded with restrictive migration policies as well as more restrictive entry systems, particularly in the central Mediterranean, making it more difficult for persons in need of international protection to seek asylum in the EU. A myriad of reasons including security concerns and pressure on their economies have been raised to explain these measures.

20 The impact of the movement of refugees to Europe in 2015 and 2016 was seen in the growing refugee population as the backlog of asylum applications was gradually processed during 2017. In particular, the refugee population in Germany increased by 45 per cent, with substantive decisions made on over half a million cases. Movements of people across the Mediterranean decreased compared with 2016. Numbers significantly declined for the Eastern Mediterranean crossing beginning in April 2016 and for the Central Mediterranean since July 2017. Nonetheless, many people continued to risk their lives traversing this sea, with the majority arriving in Italy, where some 126,500 new asylum-seekers submitted applications in 2017.

### **III. Women and youth**

### ***A. Women***

21 Among the African countries reporting sex-disaggregated data in 2017, the female proportion of refugees was 56 per cent in Chad and Togo, and 31 per cent in Angola. A 2018 study by the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) extensively documents the experiences of female refugees and migrants in origin, transit and destination countries.

22 It is common for women to face abuses across regions. In Libya, in particular on the desert stage of the journey, levels of human rights abuses suffered at the hands of smugglers or in detention centres are acute. The high cost of migration, which can range from Euro 5,500 to 60,000 is a source of financial stress makes women more vulnerable and leaves them with few choices to make money, sometimes leading to sex work as the only route open to them. Further concerns about protection relate to information about African refugees and migrants being sold as slaves in Libya. They are held in facilities and ‘rented’ out for labour and sexual exploitation, often held for ransom unless they have relatives able to pay for their release and onward migration. There are also reports of organ trafficking.

23 Increased vulnerability of women is a function of among others, traditional gender roles, their role as primary care givers, increased risks to drowning (for the pregnant, heavy clothing) and relative lack of access to mobile phones and communications. Without a phone, women are more vulnerable to abuse and with little control over what happens to them on the move.

### ***B. Youth***

24 Over the years, economic exclusion and lack of opportunities have forced young people to migrate in search of opportunities and resulted in civil unrest from which they have emerged as refugees. Most humanitarian organizations, including, UNHCR, have limited data on refugee youth (aged 15-24), so reliable statistics on the actual number of refugee youth globally are not available. However, the “youth bulge” in countries of origin, including those in Africa, suggests that this age group forms a large proportion of the refugee population. Burkina Faso, Chad, Congo, the DRC, South Sudan and Uganda all hosted refugee populations with more than 60 per cent children by the end of 2017.

25 The marginalization, isolation, and hardship of forced displacement can increase young refugees’ vulnerability to violence including sexual violence, exploitation, substance abuse, radicalization, and recruitment into gangs or armed groups. Other major challenges young refugees face includes difficulties in accessing quality learning, formal education, and skill-building opportunities, employment and livelihood opportunities, obtaining legal recognition and personal documents, and lack of safety, security, and freedom of movement. The search for solutions to the challenges young refugees face should take into account their drive, energy, entrepreneurship, language abilities, technological savvy, and other capabilities and skills, refugee youth play essential roles in supporting their peers, families, and communities.

26 African governments should harness the “demographic dividend to shape and absorb the capacities of young people in the areas of education, health, employment, governance and civic engagement, among others. The digital economy offers the potential for Africa new productive jobs for the youth, who are typically quicker at adapting to new technologies and developing new digital solutions.

## **IV. Durable solutions**

### ***A. Refugees***

27 Africa is one of the standard bearers in the implementation of the New York Declaration and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), and in advancing the “whole-of-society” comprehensive refugee response approach. This approach recognizes that humanitarian action needs to be supported by targeted development responses to manage large-scale refugee situations. The CRRF is being applied in eight countries: Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda, and Zambia—and includes a regional approach, under the auspices of IGAD, for the Somali refugee situation.

28 Furthermore, 13 countries including Cameroon, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania are implementing multi-year, multi-partner (MYMP) strategies. This is a progressive approach to protection and solutions that applies a longer-term vision to helping people of concern and their hosts, putting them at the centre of planning and priority setting in the areas they live, and providing support to national systems, institutions and civil society. These MYMP operations are currently translating their strategies into their 2019 operational plans. Due to their focus on improving long-term planning for solutions and protection by working more concertedly with partners, these strategies serve as a vehicle for the application of the CRRF. The CRRF adds two potential durable solutions’ pathways: ‘other local solutions’ and complementary pathways for admission to third countries.

### ***B. Local integration***

29 One of the three durable solutions for refugees is local integration (the other two being repatriation and resettlement). This involves a refugee finding a permanent home in the country of asylum and integrating into the local community. Several countries facilitated the local integration of refugees, including by providing durable legal status and naturalization, as foreseen in Article 34 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. In Guinea-Bissau, the Government granted citizenship to Senegalese refugees living in a protracted situation. In the context of the Nairobi Declaration, both Ethiopia and Kenya pledged to integrate certain groups of refugees.

30 The Government of Liberia is making progress on the naturalization of 300 former Sierra Leonean refugees and has agreed to implement a national framework for the local integration of refugees. The Government of Zambia started issuing temporary residency permits to former Rwandan refugees (more than 1,470 have been issued thus far), which will facilitate their stay and participation in the socio-economic development of their host communities.

### ***C. Resettlement***

31 Resettlement continues to serve as a protection tool to meet the needs of some of the most vulnerable refugees. After a steady increase in resettlement submissions from Africa between 2012 and 2016, the trend reversed in 2017, with just over 21,500 refugees submitted for resettlement, owing to a drop in available places, a 51 per cent decrease compared to 2016. Departures for resettlement countries also declined from 38,900 in 2016 to 15,800 in 2017.

Around 60 per cent of all submissions from the region involved refugees from DRC, followed by Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan.

#### ***D. Internally Displaced Persons***

32 Durable solutions for the forcibly displaced is a complex, gradual, often long-term process requiring coordinated multi-stakeholders' engagement, including strong Government leadership, with the support of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions for IDPs provides eight criteria for assessing durable solutions for IDPs, including (regardless of the nature of durable solution), long-term safety security and freedom of movement; an adequate standard of living; access to employment and livelihoods and access to mechanisms for the restoration of housing, land and property or compensation for losses.

33 Furthermore, IDPs should benefit without discrimination from access to and replacement of personal and other documentation; voluntary reunification with family members separated during displacement; participation in public affairs at all levels on an equal basis with the resident population; effective remedies for displacement-related violations including access to justice, reparations and information about the causes of violations. Many of these criteria for durable solutions constitute commitments in the Kampala Convention.

#### ***E. Development approach***

34 Historically, attempts to use development assistance to enhance refugees' access to self-reliance were mainly conceived in state-centric terms. They were premised upon the idea of development assistance being a relationship between donor States and host States. Evidence suggests that interventions were successful when a series of conditions were met. First, donor States needed to provide 'additionality' in development assistance. Second, hosts States needed to be willing to recognize that with additional development assistance they would consider opening opportunities for refugee self-reliance. Third, humanitarian and development agencies needed to work together effectively to implement projects that could credibly benefit hosts, donors, and the displaced.

35 Today, opportunities abound to think more broadly about how development relates to refugees. The private sector, innovation, and recognition of the skills, talents, and aspirations of displaced populations may hold the key to opening opportunities to enhance self-reliance. Yet, realizing these opportunities relies upon developing a new way of understanding the economic lives and impact of displaced populations. Thus, the development-displacement nexus matters. In the African context, free movement of persons, trade, particularly intra-African trade, and digitalization are three important avenues for promoting self-actualization of forcibly displaced persons.

### **V. Displacement and development**

36 Forced displacement has a complex correlation with development. The 2018 Global Report on Internally Displaced (GRID) argues that human and state security, economic growth and social stability are impossible to achieve in countries that have large numbers of people living in protracted displacement or face recurrent new displacement and high levels of risk. Displacement is both a cause and consequence of insecurity and low or unequal economic and



social development. Thus, displacement is both a growing humanitarian crisis and an obstacle to development.

37 Just as displacement can result from poor economic and social development and human security, it also threatens development gains, heightening people's vulnerability in the process. The situations in Nigeria and South Sudan are illustrative in this regard. The disruption of livelihoods caused by the shrinking of Lake Chad has undermined economic growth in Nigeria, paving the way for the rise of Boko Haram, counterinsurgency operations and widespread displacement. Armed conflict and displacement in South Sudan have exacerbated food insecurity because farmers are unable to cultivate their crops. They have also disrupted markets and driven up food prices, undermining people's resilience to other shocks.

38 Large-scale internal displacement has severe social and economic impacts, not just for those displaced but also for communities of origin, host communities and countries. Studies have highlighted seven major areas in which internal displacement may affect an economy, through impacts on housing and infrastructure, livelihoods, social and cultural factors, education, health, security and the environment. There is a need for systematic and quantitative assessments of the impacts of displacements on local and national economies and attempts to cost them coherently and comprehensively at the global level. This will inform the case for investment and encourage countries and their development partners to focus their attention on the trade-offs inherent in the setting of national priorities and development and humanitarian budgeting.

## **VI. Free movement of persons, trade and refugees**

39 The AU Agenda 2063 recognizes that free movement of persons in Africa is not only an integration aspiration, but a development enabler as well. The adoption of the Protocol on Free Movement, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment at the AU Summit in January 2018 signified an important step forward in Africa's integration agenda. In addition to enhancing Africans' rights to entry, residence and establishment in AU member states, the Protocol is key to Africa's development and an opportunity for tangible solutions to the Continent's migration challenges. The African passport will become a reality once 15 countries have ratified the Protocol. As at 31 March 2018, 31 countries had signed, and only one (Rwanda), had ratified the protocol. An African Union Commission / International Organization for Migration study concludes that free movement of Africans throughout the continent, if implemented incrementally alongside appropriate systems and procedures, can be a positive force for increasing trade, tourism and industrialization.

40 The entry into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) once ratified by 22-member States will cover a market of 1.2 billion people and a gross domestic product (GDP) of \$2.5 trillion, across all 55-member States of the African Union. As at 11 January 2019, ratification stood at 16 countries, making imminent its entry into force. AfCFTA is projected to promote industrial development in Africa, which will create new opportunities, including more jobs especially for the youth, and contribute to addressing the refugee and migration situation in the region. Several African countries including Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia are promoting a "self-reliance strategy". In Uganda, refugees can establish businesses, many of which trade with and employ host nationals. In Kenya, the model is creating greater opportunities for agriculture and entrepreneurship, and a shared marketplace for refugees and

the local population. And in Ethiopia, the government is building state-of-the-art industrial zones, which will provide jobs to both refugees and Ethiopian nationals from 2019.

## **VII. Digitalization: the forcibly displaced and stateless people**

41 The Global Compact on Refugees acknowledges that civil and birth registration helps States to have accurate information about the persons living on their territory, and is a major tool for protection and solutions, including for refugee women, girls and others with specific needs. While it does not necessarily lead to conferral of nationality, birth registration helps establish legal identity and prevent the risk of statelessness. In support of host countries, the compact called on States and relevant stakeholders to contribute resources and expertise to strengthen the capacity of national civil registries to facilitate timely access by refugees and stateless persons, as appropriate, to civil and birth registration and documentation. This could be done, including through digital technology and the provision of mobile services, subject to full respect for data protection and privacy principles.

42 Civil Registration and Vital Statistics are an essential administrative system in modern society. The civil registry provides individuals with legal documents required to secure their identity, nationality, civil rights and access to social services. Linkage and integration of civil registration and ID management system enables robust and sustainable digital identification, prevents duplication of efforts, saves resources and time, and allows efficient public service delivery. Although digital ID brings much needed opportunities for Africa's regional economic integration process, it also bares associated risks of cybersecurity, and calls for protecting and securing personal data. African countries have undertaken several initiatives aimed at tackling the challenge of managing and controlling digital data as the digital economy expands.

## **VIII. Work of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa on matters related to the theme**

43 The Humanitarian and Disaster Risk Management Cluster of RCM-Africa (Cluster 6 of RCM-Africa) is co-chaired by the Department of Political Affairs, Humanitarian Affairs, Refugees and Displaced Persons Division (HARDP) of the African Union Commission and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The African Union-working within the Cluster- has established a Steering Committee involving the broad range of Cluster membership, stakeholders and partners to coordinate the implementation of the 2019 AU theme of the year activities. The Steering Committee has supported the development of a concept notes and roadmap for the implementation of the AU 2019 theme of the Year.

44 The Cluster has implemented activities and initiatives pertaining to the implementation of the Common African Position (CAP) on Humanitarian Effectiveness, including coherence and coordination of humanitarian actions in Africa, the protection of civilians and the cross-cutting issue of integration from planning to implementation stages. Additionally, the Cluster advanced efforts to accelerate the ratification and implementation of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (the Kampala Convention). It is also working with the AU and partners towards the commemoration activities to mark the fiftieth anniversary of 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa and the tenth anniversary of the Kampala Convention.

45 On reduction in disaster risk and losses through effective implementation of the programme of action for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Africa, the Cluster's work includes enhancing early warning systems and capacity for early action. Work also entails: effective response in the context of the Africa programme of action and Sendai Framework; popularization and implementation of the programme of action in Africa; implementation, monitoring, and review of the programme of action and strengthening the Africa regional platform for disaster risk reduction; and the Africa working group on disaster risk reduction.

46 Furthermore, the RCM-Africa Cluster 7 on environment, urbanization and population supported the implementation of the AU agenda on climate change. Cluster 9 on peace and security has been carrying out activities in the areas of preventing and mediating conflict and sustaining peace, conflict prevention, the utilization of good offices and mediation, electoral matters and governance, human rights protection and humanitarian assistance. Moreover, the work of all the other RCM-Africa clusters, such as; Cluster 1, whose areas of focus include trade and regional integration, Cluster 3, include technology, Cluster 4, migration, and Cluster 5, gender, women and young people; and its four Sub regional Coordination Mechanisms have a bearing on the theme, which is crosscutting. Therefore, Cluster 6 in collaboration with all relevant clusters of RCM-Africa should ensure successful implementation of the roadmap for the AU 2019 theme of the Year.

## **IX. Conclusion**

47 The drivers of forced displacement (refugees and IDPs) include conflicts stemming from poverty, and political, social and economic inequalities, persecution, other human rights abuses, food insecurity, climate change and natural disasters. African governments should deepen structural economic transformation through industrialization and economic diversification in order to create jobs and reduce economic vulnerability, and poverty.

48 Continued prudent macroeconomic policies are needed to maintain stability, provide incentives and support the business environment for the private sector to play its role. The youth bulge provides Africa with the opportunity to harness the demographic dividend by investing in health, education and skills development of young people. There is also a need to foster good governance and implement global and regional frameworks on climate change and disaster risk reduction, including the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework and the Africa regional strategy for disaster risk reduction. In Africa, the global and continental sustainable development agendas provide robust frameworks to address the drivers.

49 Both the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Africa Union Agenda 2063 strongly recognize the principles of "inclusiveness" and "leaving no one behind". Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies embodies this principle in a fundamental way. Most of the SDGs and associated Agenda 2063 goals are also relevant to forced displacement. While humanitarian action is important, it must be linked to development for sustainable and lasting solutions. More should be done to understand the displacement-development nexus, and global and regional frameworks and initiatives leveraged to prevent and mitigate the challenges of refugees, returnees and IDPs.

## **X. Issues for discussion**

50 The high-level panels on the theme of the 20<sup>th</sup> Session of RCM-Africa may wish to consider the following.

### ***A. Addressing the root causes of refugees and IDPs***

51 The drivers of the refugee and IDP situation in Africa are well documented. They range from conflict fuelled by poverty and political, social, and economic inequalities between groups; to persecution, other human rights abuses and food insecurity. This is exacerbated by climate change, which threaten the already precarious food security of vulnerable refugees, IDPs and their host communities across the continent. How could countries with the support of their development partners and with the involvement of all stakeholders, address these root causes at local, national, regional and global levels in a sustainable manner?

### ***B. Upscaling durable solutions, including addressing the forced displacement-development nexus***

52 The efforts of Member States, the African Union, development actors and humanitarian organizations in coming up with durable solutions to address the situation of refugees, returnees and IDPs are laudable, and appreciable progress has been observed. However, given the magnitude of the challenges, it would be fitting to investigate how solutions currently being applied could be up-scaled and out-scaled to deepen and widen the support. It would also be worthwhile exploring other viable solutions outside the current ones that could be applied to further alleviate the situation. Moreover, the increasing recognition of the forced displacement-development nexus warrants an investigation into solutions that address the nexus, and the role of all relevant stakeholders in their application.

### ***C. Coordinating the work under the Compacts for Migration, and on Refugees***

53 While it is understood that migrants and refugees fall into two distinct categories in terms of drivers and legal instruments governing their treatment, there are commonalities in their circumstances arising from movement from their country/ area of origin to destination countries or areas within the same country in the case of IDPs. The phenomenon of mixed movements of migrants and refugees is increasingly being observed. Both the GCR and the GCM stemmed from the New York Declaration of September 2016. How should the two Compacts be implemented in a coordinated manner to ensure that no one is left behind, protection gaps are avoided while at the same time ensure implementation efficiency and effectiveness?

### ***D. The Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa's support to the African Union agenda on refugees, returnees and Internally Displaced Persons***

54 An important objective of the RCM-Africa sessions mirroring the AU themes is to explore how the Mechanism could support the implementation of the continental body's agenda on the thematic area. Regarding the present theme, Cluster 6 of the Mechanism dealing with humanitarian matters and disaster risk management is expected to take the lead role. Given that the theme is crosscutting, other Clusters, including Cluster 9 on governance, peace and security and several others working on economic, social and environmental matters. In this regard, it is important to deliberate on how participating agencies of RCM-Africa will organize around the theme with a view to providing the support required to achieve concrete results in the most efficient manner.