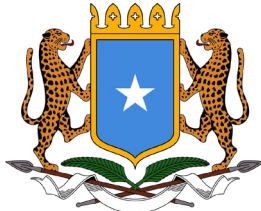




Situation report on migration in Somalia



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Situation report on migration in Somalia



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Introduction

A. Context

Somalia is a major source, host and transit country for international migration. In recent history, Somalia has witnessed significant social, political and economic changes. Many Somalis are living in poverty and lack access to social services. Approximately 4.2 million people in Somalia were in need of humanitarian assistance in 2020, of which 2.6 million were internally displaced persons (IDPs), 92,000 were refugee returnees and 39,000 were refugees.¹ Around two million people have migrated from Somalia according to 2021 estimates.² Due to its limited adaptive capacity and its geographic location, Somalia is especially vulnerable to climate change. In 2020, floods caused more than 900,000 people to be displaced, while the drought of 2022 resulted in the displacement of roughly 700,000 people in the first half of the year. The combination of protracted conflicts, extreme poverty, unemployment and exposure to climate change have driven many people in Somalia to migrate from their homes.

Migration is multidimensional in nature and cuts across several sectors, including social protection, education, health, citizenship and poverty, making the link between migration and development particularly important. Migration from Somalia is often fraught with difficulties.

Somalis in general, and the country's young people in particular, often pursue irregular modes of migration, exposing themselves to the risk of exploitation and abuse at the hands of human traffickers. Relative stability in recent years, coupled with increased instability in neighbouring countries, has led to the continued return of Somalis to their country. The limited capacity of the State, however, has made it difficult for Somalia to support returnees in making a smooth transition back home.

Well-managed migration can contribute to economic and social development. In this pursuit, the Government of Somalia has paid increased attention to international migration governance in recent years, engaging in interregional, regional and subregional processes. Nonetheless, a comprehensive strategy on migration governance in Somalia is yet to be developed. Recognizing the need to develop evidence-based policies to better govern migration in Somalia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MoFAIC) requested technical assistance from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) to prepare a situational analysis report on international migration in Somalia. The present report will provide the evidence needed to develop a national migration strategy.

1 Mohn, 2020.

2 International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2021.

B. Objectives

The situational analysis is aimed at:

- Investigating the institutional setup relevant to migration governance in Somalia.
- Exploring synergies across stakeholders working on migration.
- Identifying challenges and opportunities to be included in the national migration strategy.

C. Methodology

The present situation analysis report focuses on three groups of migrants. The first group, although not sizeable, is critical to the study and includes international migrants in Somalia. The second group comprises Somali emigrants who have formed a diaspora outside the country, and the third constitutes people who have previously migrated from Somalia but have since returned to the country (returnees). Although Somalia is home to almost three million IDPs,³ it already has relatively developed policies addressing this group of people. Thus, the present report will not discuss IDPs in detail but will rather focus on migrant groups that continue to be left behind in policy and practice.

The present situation analysis adopts a mixed-methods approach, which includes reviewing quantitative data on migrant groups as well as conducting qualitative interviews with government stakeholders to better understand the current migration governance framework. A local consultant was hired to conduct a desk review and interviews as follows:

- A thorough review of available documents and reports on migration in Somalia.
- A review of national, regional and international legal documents.
- Ten in-depth interviews with governmental entities (a list of interviewed stakeholders is included in the annex).

D. Key terminology

Brief definitions of key terms and concepts used in this study are provided as follows:⁴

- **Diaspora:** migrants or descendants of migrants whose identity and sense of belonging, either real or symbolic, have been shaped by their migration experience and background. They maintain links with their homelands, and to each other, based on a shared sense of history, identity or mutual experiences in the destination country.
- **Internally displaced persons (IDPs):** persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.
- **Migrant:** any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary;

³ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2023b.

⁴ These definitions are all taken from ESCWA and others, 2022.

(3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is. This does not include refugees or people who are likely to be in need of international protection, such as asylum-seekers.

- **Refugee:** any person who meets the eligibility criteria under an applicable refugee definition, as provided for in international or regional refugee instruments, under UNHCR's mandate, or in national legislation. Under international law and UNHCR's mandate, refugees are persons outside their countries of origin who are in need of international protection because of feared persecution, or a serious threat to their life, physical integrity or freedom in their country of origin as a result of persecution, armed conflict, violence or serious public disorder.

Note: Under international law, a person is considered a refugee as soon as they meet the relevant criteria, whether or not they have been formally recognized as a refugee. A person does not become a refugee because of recognition, but rather is recognized because they are a refugee. Sometimes—notably in statistical contexts—the word refugee is used to designate individuals or groups who have been formally recognized by States or UNHCR as entitled to refugee status following an asylum or other status determination procedure. When this

limited nonlegal meaning is intended, it should be clearly indicated. The clearest designation in such contexts is recognized refugee.

- **Return migration:** an umbrella term to refer to the various forms, methods and processes by which migrants return or are compelled to return to their country of origin or habitual residence, or to a third country. This includes, inter alia, independent departure, assisted, voluntary or spontaneous return, deportation, expulsion, removal, extradition, pushback, handover, transfer or any other return arrangement. The use of the term "return" provides no determination as to the degree of voluntariness or compulsion in the decision to return, nor of the lawfulness or arbitrariness of the return.

E. Structure

The report opens with a chapter on migration and migration management in Somalia. It discusses migration data, as well as national, regional and international migration frameworks, policies, and programmes. The report then presents an analysis of the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) for Somalia. Finally, it concludes with a roadmap for the way forward, and outlines concrete steps that can be taken based on contexts and national priorities.

1. Migration to and from Somalia

A. Context

Somalia has a population of over 17 million people.⁵ It is primarily a source and transit country with three main migratory routes: the eastern route to the Gulf countries, the western route through the Sudan to southern Europe, and the southern route to southern Africa.⁶ There are also a small number of migrants and refugees who choose to settle in Somalia.

B. International migrants and refugees in Somalia

As at 2020, there were 58,590 migrants and refugees in Somalia, with more than half coming from Ethiopia (21,764) and Yemen (13,285).⁷ As at 2023, Somalia has hosted 16,172 refugees and 18,700 asylum-seekers of forced displacement, 67 per cent of which are from Ethiopia and 29 per cent from Yemen.⁸ In terms of demographic composition, 26 per cent of the refugees and asylum-seekers are women and girls of reproductive age (13-49 years) and 31 per cent are school-age children (6-17 years).⁹

Given the lack of disaggregated data, no insight can be gained into the socioeconomic status of migrants in Somalia. According to MoLSA, there are about 25,000 migrant workers in Mogadishu.¹⁰ MoLSA stated in an interview that only 7,750 of the migrants in the country were skilled, the majority of whom work in the health and education sectors.

C. Somali emigrants and refugees

The latest migrant stock data show that more than two million Somalis, in total, are living outside the country, half of whom chose Kenya (425,284), Ethiopia (411,152) and Yemen (280,940) as their destination countries.¹¹ Almost half of the Somali emigrants have been forcibly displaced due to the prevalence of insecurity and the climate shocks in the country. Data reported at the end of 2021 have shown that there are 836,300 Somali refugees and asylum seekers, the majority of whom are living in neighbouring countries, such as Kenya and Ethiopia, which host 279,200 and 250,719 Somalis, respectively.¹²

5 World Bank, n.d.

6 IOM, 2018.

7 ESCWA and others, 2022.

8 UNHCR, 2023c.

9 Ibid.

10 International Labour Organization (ILO), 2020.

11 United Nations, 2020.

12 UNHCR, 2023d.

D. Somali returnees

Somalia has witnessed increased numbers of migrants and refugees returning home. According to the Government, more than 4,000 migrants returned from Saudi Arabia in 2019.¹³ This process has been facilitated by relatively more stable and secure conditions in Somalia, coupled with an instability in countries of destination. For instance, many Somali refugees and economic migrants have returned home since the conflict in Yemen began in 2015. Several arrangements were made for the return of refugees and migrants to Somalia, such as the November 2013 tripartite agreement governing the voluntary repatriation of Somali

refugees living in Kenya, which was concluded between Kenya, Somalia and UNHCR to usher in a period of refugee returns to Somalia. A total of 137,095 refugees have returned to Somalia since 2014, with 85,904 of them being from Kenya and 48,827 from Yemen.¹⁴ Most of the returns took place between 2015 and 2017. More than two-thirds of the refugee returns were assisted, while the remaining were spontaneous. In addition, migrants have been forcibly returned from Gulf States, with over 15,000 returns reported as at December 2022.¹⁵ Returnees have faced various difficulties in reintegrating in their society owing to a multitude of factors, including conflicts, resource scarcity and stigmatization.¹⁶

Tahriib: A dangerous and illegal journey

“Tahriib” is a Somali word used to refer to the emigration of young Somalis, usually men, to Europe via North Africa. The irregular process is risky and can lead to death. To support young people, IOM provides services to returnees (such as micro-grants to build livelihoods). Yet, those returning home often face great shame and stigmatization in their perceived “failed migration”.

Source: Rift Valley Institute, [Going on Tahriib: the causes and consequences of Somali youth migration to Europe](#), 2016.

E. National framework

The national migration governance framework in Somalia spans institutions, policies and programmes. It is relatively well-developed, but evidence suggests that it lacks capacity and dedicated resources.

1. Institutions

(a) National Commission for Refugees and IDPs

The National Commission for Refugees and IDPs (NCRI) was established in the wake of the 1977 war between Somalia and Ethiopia,

¹³ IOM, 2021.

¹⁴ UNHCR, 2023a.

¹⁵ IOM, 2023a.

¹⁶ IOM, 2023b.

and was reestablished in 2013 by a decision of the Council of Ministers. On 10 January 2014, the prime minister of Somalia decided that NCRI would remain operationally autonomous but would be placed under the policy supervision of the Minister of Interior and Federal Affairs. NCRI is part of the national task force established by the Federal Government of Somalia and the Aid Committee to deal with the Yemeni crisis. It helped advocate for Somali returnees from Yemen, whereby members of the parliament pledged \$300,000 to assist with the evacuation of Somali refugees fleeing the war in Yemen. A vessel was donated by a Somali businessman supporting the evacuation. In addition, NCRI offers reintegration programmes for returnees, providing them with start-up capital and vocational training, in coordination with IOM and UNHCR.

(b) Office of the Special Envoy for Children’s and Migrants’ Rights, Office of the Prime Minister

The Government of Somalia established the Office of the Special Envoy on Children’s and Migrants’ Rights in 2015 to coordinate the management of the migration system in Somalia and provide durable solutions to the challenges posed by migration flows into and out of Somalia.

The Office of the Special Envoy has supported the reintegration of young men and women back into society upon their return through assisted voluntary return and reintegration programmes. The office has helped over 2,500 young people returning home with reintegration packages.¹⁷ The Office has worked with IOM on developing a roadmap for a national migration

framework, with the hope of establishing a formal national migration policy. It has also implemented awareness-raising programmes to prevent irregular migration. The “Telling the Real Story” campaign is part of a global UNHCR campaign that involved consultations with civil society, academics and youth associations.¹⁸

(c) National Coordination Mechanism on Migration

On 19 May 2016, the prime minister of Somalia announced the creation of three task forces to improve migration management:

- High-level task force on migration management.
- Technical task force on human trafficking and smuggling.
- Technical task force on return and readmission.

The three task forces collectively constitute the Somali National Coordination Mechanism on Migration and are supported by the Office of the Special Envoy. They received training on migration management from IOM in 2016.¹⁹

The task forces have three primary functions:

1. Coordination and cooperation among government agencies and other stakeholders on migration-related issues.
2. Development and implementation of migration policies and programmes.
3. Monitoring and evaluation of migration policies.

However, interest in these task forces appears to have waned since the new Somali Government

¹⁷ IOM, 2022b.

¹⁸ Telling the Real Story, n.d.

¹⁹ Altai Consulting and Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, 2016, p. 25–26.

came into power in 2017, and they are no longer functioning as an established coordination mechanism. The Government of Somalia is now planning to establish a mixed migration task force aimed at providing a coordination platform for the work of the United Nations, regional and international organizations, non-governmental organizations and donors. The mixed migration task force will meet with the Office of the Special Envoy on a quarterly basis to coordinate their work and avoid duplication of efforts.

(d) Department of Diaspora Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation established the Department of Diaspora Affairs in 2013 to engage with the Somali diaspora and connect diplomatic embassies with diaspora community associations and citizens around the world. The department was tasked with the coordination, mobilization and unification of diaspora groups. In 2022, it completed the national diaspora policy, which is yet to be officially adopted. The department also works to ensure that the targets set forth in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration are reflected in the National Development Plan. The department was also involved in the “Telling the Real Story” campaign.

(e) Government ministries

In addition to the above-mentioned structure created to address migration issues, other government ministries support migration governance. The following activities were reported in private interviews with the local consultant:

- The Department of Legal and Labour Relations at MoLSA has the mandate to recruit foreign employees, provide work permits, and handle general procedures and services to oversee Somali workers traveling abroad for employment. The department is involved in providing pre-departure guidance to Somali migrant workers to support them in understanding their position, rights and responsibilities and the general context of the country they are traveling to.
- The Ministry of Women and Human Rights engages with young people to raise their awareness on regular migration pathways and create opportunities for them by collaborating with local universities, religious leaders and businesses so as to dissuade them from taking the risky migration journey. The ministry has also been collaborating with women in the diaspora to support the delivery of basic services and encourage them to invest in Somalia.
- The Ministry of Education has been working to break the negative stereotype of migrants. In 2018, the ministry revamped the primary and secondary educational curricula.
- The health promotion unit of the Ministry of Health has a programme aimed at increasing health service seeking among migrants and IDPs.
- The Somali National Bureau of Statistics is planning to conduct new population surveys that include migrants in 2025, as well as to establish a migrant data unit.

2. Policies

Despite there not being a national migration strategy in Somalia, there are other policies

in place that address migration issues in the country.

(a) National Policy on Refugee-Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons

The National Policy on Refugee-Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons is led by the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation, acting through the National Commission for Refugees and IDPs. It outlines the rights of refugee-returnees and IDPs, stating that they should enjoy the same rights as all citizens. It also devotes special attention to vulnerable groups such as women and girls. For example, it covers counselling for victims of sexual violence and other abuse. The implementation of this policy is to be conducted in parallel with the National Development Plan.

(b) National Development Plan (2020-2024)

The Somali National Development Plan references migration in terms of the contributions of the diaspora to development, mainly through remittances. It mentions the significant increase in remittances, which reached approximately \$1.4 billion, or over 25 per cent of the gross domestic product of Somalia, in 2018. It should be noted that 20 per cent of Somalis received remittances in 2018, and poverty in these households was estimated to be 5 per cent lower. The plan includes a human capital development strategy that references brain gain from highly skilled Somalis among the diaspora who choose to return.

(c) National Durable Solutions Strategy (2020-2024)

The National Durable Solutions Strategy was developed under the leadership of the durable

solutions unit at the Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development and the National Durable Solutions Secretariat, which is comprised of 14 government institutions. The strategy seeks to create an enabling environment for IDPs, refugees, asylum seekers, refugee returnees, and even vulnerable host communities to access durable solutions. The success of the progressive durable solutions policy in the country is evidenced by the fact that 85 per cent of refugee returnees are satisfied with their decision to return.²⁰ Nevertheless, there are significant challenges and barriers acknowledged in the strategy, including the low capacity of government actors, donor fatigue, protracted humanitarian crises, weak urban systems and widespread insecurity.

(d) Foreign Employment Act (2015)

The Foreign Employment Act of 2015 contains 27 articles that define the rights of foreign workers in Somalia, and outline governmental responsibilities. It is overseen by MoLSA and forms the basis for governing the migration of labour to the country.

(e) Somali National Diaspora Policy – 2022 [not yet enacted]

The Government of Somalia, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and with the support of IOM, has developed a national diaspora policy that is yet to be enacted. The policy aims to facilitate the contribution of the Somali diaspora to sustainable development in the country, and encourages the temporary or permanent return of migrants to Somalia, while supporting returnees' reintegration back home. It also focuses on initiatives to integrate the diaspora

20 Durable solutions unit of the Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development, Federal Government of Somalia (n.d.).

as well as development strategies to maximize their contributions to development in Somalia. The policy identifies opportunities to better engage with the diaspora who want to invest in Somalia but are hesitant to do so owing to the lack of reliable investment options.

(f) [Somalia Refugee Act 2019 \[not yet enacted\]](#)

The Somalia Refugee Act was developed in 2019 but has not yet been adopted. It reflects an attempt to enshrine new global developments and agreements, such as the Global Compact for Refugees and the Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region. It should be noted that while Somalia has been a party to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees since 1978, it has not ratified the 1969 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa.²¹

3. Programmes

In addition to institutions and policies, there are programmes that are being conducted to support migration governance in Somalia.

(a) [Better Migration Management programme](#)

The Better Migration Management programme has been active since April 2016. It is funded by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), IOM and the United

Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. With support from the Ministry of Internal Security in Somalia, the programme aims to “enable national authorities and institutions to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration and to effectively address and reduce trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants within and from the Horn of Africa region by using a human rights-based approach”.²² As at September 2022, the programme has had the following results:²³

- Capacity-building on migration management for 1,118 local officials.
- Capacity-building on human trafficking, integrated border management and referral of migrants to services for 1,254 State and non-State actors.
- Direct assistance (accommodation, basic services, medical support) to 465 vulnerable migrants.
- Referral of 1,258 individuals to services providing accommodation, basic services and medical support.

(b) [Migration for Development in Africa](#)

To facilitate knowledge transfer from the Somali diaspora, IOM has been implementing the Migration for Development in Africa programme since 2009. The programme works with highly qualified Somali diaspora to bring them home on a short-term basis and develop institutional capacity. The programme has already placed over 700 individuals in various public institutions across the country.²⁴

²¹ UNHCR, 2020.

²² United Nations Network on Migration, 2016.

²³ GIZ, 2023.

²⁴ IOM, 2022c.

4. Partnerships

(a) Tripartite Commission for the Voluntary Repatriation of Somali Refugees from Kenya

The Governments of Kenya and Somalia, and UNHCR established a tripartite commission in 2013 to support the voluntary return and reintegration of 435,000 Somalis between 2015 and 2019.²⁵ The process included providing Somalis with cash grants and relief items for their journey home, as well as cash grants, food and community-based support upon returning home.

(b) Regional Ministerial Forum on Migration for East and Horn of Africa

Recognizing the importance of labour rights and mobility, 11 States, including Somalia, established the Regional Ministerial Forum on Migration for East and Horn of Africa²⁶ in 2020. The forum is aimed at addressing labour migration policies, fostering labour mobility and protecting the human rights of migrant workers within Africa, the European Union (EU), Gulf Cooperation Council, and other countries.

(c) Regional Migrant Response Plan for the Horn of Africa and Yemen

The Regional Migrant Response Plan for the Horn of Africa and Yemen²⁷ was established to facilitate a more harmonized response to humanitarian and other needs of migrants and host communities in the Horn of Africa and Yemen. The plan has four partners in Somalia, which will support 67,280 migrants (2,015 departing migrants; 46,100 transiting migrants; 17,400 migrants at destination living in Somalia;

and 1,765 returnees) and 460,805 host community members. The plan will largely focus on host communities affected by the drought in the Horn of Africa.

F. International and regional frameworks

1. Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

In December 2018, the majority of United Nations Member States adopted the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. It was the first internationally negotiated agreement to address the issue of migration in such a holistic and comprehensive manner. Although it is non-binding, it has a corresponding review process that invites countries to submit voluntary national reviews. Somalia has not yet submitted a review.

In March 2021, the United Nations Network on Migration was launched in Somalia with IOM as the secretariat. The network helps monitor and support the implementation of the 23 objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Objective 19 of the Compact, for example, focuses on creating conditions for migrants and the diaspora to fully contribute to sustainable development, a topic of particular importance to the Somali context.

2. Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018 – 2030)

The Migration Policy Framework developed by the African Union provides guidance on the formulation of migration policies. It offers a

²⁵ UNHCR, 2015.

²⁶ IOM, n.d.

²⁷ IOM, 2023b.

broad range of recommendations on various migration issues and allows stakeholders to use elements that are in line with their specific priorities and circumstances. In the case of Somalia, the section on “Diaspora Engagement” includes recommendations to establish national diaspora focal points and/or agencies, conduct diaspora mapping, and facilitate knowledge transfers from the diaspora back to countries of origin.

3. IGAD Nairobi Declaration on Somali Refugees (March 2017)

IGAD signed a declaration and adopted the Nairobi Comprehensive Plan of Action for Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees. Its main

objective is to “create an enabling environment for safe, sustainable and voluntary return and reintegration of Somali refugees”.²⁸

4. Khartoum Process (EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative) (November 2014)

Somalia is a member of the Khartoum Process, which focuses on addressing human trafficking and smuggling networks along the EU-Horn of Africa route. It is a platform for political cooperation, providing impetus for collaboration between countries of origin, transit and destination. It also offers support to victims of trafficking and promotes sustainable development to tackle the root causes of irregular migration in countries of origin.²⁹

28 Intergovernmental Authority on Development, 2017.

29 Khartoum process, n.d.

2. SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis for Somalia can help guide and inform a national migration strategy that builds on the country's strengths and opportunities and considers its weaknesses and threats. A SWOT analysis can also facilitate a better understanding of the key persisting challenges, and the areas that can be leveraged for the management of migration.

A. Strengths

Despite the challenging context within Somalia and the external factors affecting the country, there are strengths that can be capitalized on to inform the national migration strategy and improve migration management.

Firstly, the institutional structure and mechanisms needed for a robust migration management system are already in place. The Government has established specialized bodies to support the diaspora (Department of Diaspora Affairs), migrants (Office of the Special Envoy for Children's and Migrants' Rights) and refugees (National Commission for Refugees and IDPs). It has also set up task forces on migration management, human trafficking and smuggling, and return and readmission to facilitate coordination. However, the Government is considering replacing these task forces with a mixed migration task force owing to the lack of traction of the existing task forces. These institutions provide a solid foundation from which to build on and demonstrate the political will of the Government to acknowledge the importance of migration governance.

Furthermore, there are several policies that have already been developed (although not all have been adopted) to address the needs of specific migrant groups.

Secondly, stakeholders have been successful in developing and implementing a durable solutions programme for displaced persons. Although this programme is mainly geared towards IDPs, who number almost three million, it also targets refugees, returnees and vulnerable host communities. This can be seen as an area of strength, signaling capacity and willingness of stakeholders to address migration issues.

Finally, there is significant international and regional support for migration governance in Somalia. This is evidenced by the numerous international programmes in the country as well as the various agreements, such as the Nairobi Declaration and Khartoum Process. Such external commitments can be critical in supporting a more comprehensive migration management system in the country.

B. Weaknesses

There are significant shortcomings in the migration governance framework that need to be considered.

Firstly, the migration governance framework suffers from a lack of data. At the country level, there is no common database on migrants and refugees. There is also little disaggregation of

the data that exist, such as that on remittances or on the socioeconomic profile of migrants, emigrants and returnees.

Secondly, there is a shortage of programmes that support outward and inward labour migrants. The country lacks pre-departure training for Somali migrant workers to inform them of their rights and offer them support in the case of exploitation, as well as on-arrival training for migrant workers coming to Somalia to help them transition and integrate better.

Thirdly, resource constraints limit the capacity of staff working on migration management, who require capacity-building. There is also a shortage of funding for migration management, with most funds being focused on immediate humanitarian needs.

Finally, despite the establishment of task forces, there is limited coordination between the stakeholders involved in migration management. This complicates efforts to develop harmonized and coherent national policies that involve multiple stakeholders.

C. Opportunities

Given the dynamic nature of migration to and from Somalia, there are multiple opportunities that can be explored to improve migration management.

Firstly, there are a number of diaspora organizations that are already working to bridge the humanitarian-development nexus through their combined short-term provision of relief and longer-term community-based support. Building on existing connections with these organizations and developing new connections

can enable the Government to maximize the potential of the sizeable diaspora to support development back home.

Secondly, the country can benefit from the skills and experience of the significant number of voluntary returnees to Somalia. This requires strategic support programmes that maximize the contributions of returnees to the communities they return to. It also necessitates help for returnees to transition to life in Somalia and ensure their relations with host communities are cooperative.

Finally, there is a wide range of stakeholders addressing migration issues, which creates opportunities for mainstreaming migration across the board to ensure a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach to migration management. As such, the next national development plan can integrate and address the issue of migration to a much greater extent. In addition, sectoral policies, such as education and health policies, can adopt a more migrant-sensitive approach. This will help ensure that migrants are not left behind and empower them to contribute meaningfully to the sustainable development of the country.

D. Threats

Several threats have and may continue to affect migration governance in Somalia.

Firstly, the protracted conflict and instability in Somalia as well in neighbouring countries has significant implications on migration to and from Somalia. These conditions cause humanitarian crises and massive uprooting of populations, and make it hard to settle permanently in one location.

Secondly, climate change and unpredictable weather patterns may disrupt livelihoods and drive further outward migration from the country. Early warning mechanisms can be developed to improve mitigation and adaptation.

Thirdly, economic underdevelopment may continue to threaten already precarious food and water security, thereby driving further outward migration, especially irregular

migration. With continued challenges, there is less incentive for emigrants and refugees to return and more incentive for Somalis to travel abroad in search of better opportunities.

Finally, the prevalence of human trafficking networks may be hard to counter given their entrenched interests and significant power. Without action, they will continue to take advantage of desperate migrants, smuggling them from and through Somalia.

SWOT summary graphic



3. Roadmap for the way forward

The way forward from this study comprises five steps: the first is for Somalia to adopt a national migration strategy; the second is to devote dedicated resources to migration management under this framework; the third is to considerably improve data on migration needs to ensure that the country can develop evidence-based policies; the fourth is for the country to follow through on adopting the laws and policies that it has developed but not yet adopted (such as the National Diaspora Policy and Refugee Act); and the last step is to increase engagement with international processes such as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

A. Developing a migration strategy

The first step is to develop and adopt a national migration strategy, which is essential to help organize the governance framework and facilitate greater policy coherence. The strategy should build on the strengths and opportunities identified in the SWOT analysis and be mindful of the weaknesses and threats. It should also be aligned with the current framework, most notably the national development plan.

Based on the SWOT analysis, national priorities and international frameworks, the strategy should focus on the following five areas:

1. Promoting the safe and voluntary return and reintegration of Somali migrants.
2. Regularizing migration pathways through bilateral agreements and international cooperation.
3. Combating migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons.
4. Minimizing the drivers of irregular migration and forced displacement through a comprehensive development approach.
5. Engaging the Somali diaspora in sustainable development and reducing the costs of sending and receiving remittances.

B. Devoting dedicated resources

For the strategy to be successful, resource constraints should be addressed. This will require dedicating human, financial and other resources needed for the strategy, in addition to advocacy, transparency and clear budgeting. It may also require technical capacity-building for those working on migration management.

C. Strengthening data

A common theme that emerged during the desk research and interviews is the lack of sufficient data on the topic of migration in Somalia to develop evidence-based policymaking. For this reason, the creation of a migration data unit in the Somalia National Bureau of Statistics is essential, and so is the plan to include modules on migration in the 2025 population census. Nevertheless, more is needed to develop a harmonized database that better captures

socioeconomic characteristics of migrants from and to Somalia.

D. Building on nascent institutions and laws

The migrant governance system in Somalia stands to benefit from the adoption of already existing laws and the operationalization of nascent institutions. There are several laws that have been drafted but not yet adopted, including the Refugee Act and the National Diaspora Policy. In addition, the established task forces on migration are not currently functioning effectively and require attention to ensure that they serve as periodic coordination and oversight mechanisms as originally planned.

E. Increasing engagement in international processes such as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

Somalia should increase its involvement in international processes. It can begin by preparing a voluntary national review for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The process can encourage an inclusive and comprehensive assessment of progress in implementing the Compact and highlight challenges, opportunities and resource requirements to accelerate implementation and ensure that migrants are not left behind.

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Annex: List of interviewed ministries and agencies

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- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Information
- Ministry of Interior
- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
- Ministry of Planning
- Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development
- National Bureau of Statistics
- Office of the Special Envoy for Children's and Migrants' Rights

