

Climate, Security, and the Role of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in the Horn of Africa

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Introduction

The Horn of Africa (hereafter the Horn) is renowned for inter and intra-state conflicts, violent extremism, fragile political orders, extreme poverty, and drought. In responding to these challenges, governments in the Horn and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a region-wide organisation, have put in place development initiatives and expressed aspirations focused on improving the economic and human security situations. A recent democratic election in Kenya serves as an example of a peaceful transition of power in the region. Economic growth policy in Ethiopia has lifted millions out of poverty. In Somalia, the federal government, with international and regional partners such as the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia, are working together to ensure security and strengthen the state-building process. These development and peace initiatives are, however, precarious and regularly challenged by different forms of insecurity. Recently, climate security risks have increasingly affected the region. Alarming, drought is becoming an existential threat to the Horn, with specific intensity in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia.

Drought-related security risks transcend national boundaries. The responses of intergovernmental organisations such as IGAD are becoming essential. As such, this article examines the IGAD response to regional climate security risks.

Climate Security Risks in the Horn

With its history of ethnic, resource, and inter and intra-state conflicts, the Horn is vulnerable to climate security threats.¹ Currently, the region is experiencing an extreme drought that is unprecedented in the past 40 years.² Security concerns emerging from the drought include environmental degradation, increased food insecurity, livelihood loss, forced migration and displacement, and inter and intra-communal violence.

Environmental Degradation

Environmental security is a component of human security that embraces threats to the environment such as the degradation of ecosystems and the pollution of water, air, and soil.³ Environmental security is concerned with the impacts of human activities on the environment and the implications of environmental change as a security problem common to all.⁴ The Horn is increasingly susceptible

to erratic weather conditions. Environmental degradation is one repercussion of erratic weather conditions that is significantly impacting socioeconomic development in the region. Various types of environmental degradation, such as soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, high temperatures, deforestation, and desertification, are occurring in the Horn. Each of these needs to be understood holistically. In addition to the implications of climate change, for example, land degradation is accelerating due to a combination of factors, such as the large-scale conversion of rangeland to cropland, rapid urbanisation, population pressures, and increasing levels of pollution.⁵

Food Insecurity and Loss of Livelihood

Climate variability and an increase in the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events exacerbate household insecurity, especially for those relying on rainfed agriculture or pastoralism. As of November 2022, more than 36.4 million people had been affected by the drought.⁶ This segment of the population is already in desperate need of aid. The Horn is heavily reliant on food imports from Russia and Ukraine. As a result of the war, the region is experiencing skyrocketing prices and disruptions in the supply chain of these commodities.⁷ Food insecurity has dire impacts on the most vulnerable social groups, specifically children and women. UNICEF states that more than 10 million children in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia will need water and food assistance.⁸ Nearly 1 million pregnant and lactating women are also acutely malnourished.⁹

Climate change affects all facets of livelihoods in the region. It causes the death of livestock and crops, the displacement of people, an increase in the risk of disease and malnutrition, surges in food prices, and pushes children and families to the brink of destitution and death. Since mid-2021, more than 9.5 million livestock have perished in the region due to a lack of water, starvation, and disease.¹⁰

Forced Displacement and Migration

Climate-induced migration is an adaptation strategy for groups of people whose livelihoods and survival are jeopardised by the impacts of climate change. A large part of the population in the Horn pursues agrarian, semi-pastoralist, and pastoralist livelihoods that depend on the natural resources of water, arable land, and rangelands to survive. The effects of climate change are critical factors in the decisions people make to migrate. Climate-vulnerable communities in the Horn are migrating in search of employment opportunities, pasture for their livestock, and life-saving food assistance.¹¹ Communities are exposed to forcible displacement under extreme weather conditions such as drought and flooding. Inter and intra-communal violence also factor into their decisions. As of August 2022, due to drought, conflict, and other factors, more than 9 million people in the Horn had migrated in search of food, pasture, water, and alternative livelihoods.¹² This trend is expected to increase in the coming months because the region is in the midst of a likely fifth consecutive failed rainy season, from October to December 2022.

Inter and Intra-communal Conflict

Recurrent climate change-induced drought affects the sustainable development of the Horn by exacerbating inter and intra-communal violence. It does so in three primary ways. First, drought increases competition over scarce resources and intensifies existing community tensions and vulnerabilities.¹³ Access to land and water has been linked to conflict among pastoralist and agropastoral communities in the Horn.¹⁴ The practice of cattle rustling and the abundant presence of illicit small arms and light weapons in Ethiopia and Somalia further fuel perennial conflicts among pastoralists and agropastoralists. Second, by increasing and changing the patterns of migration and mobility, recurrent drought places additional burdens on the economic resource base, such as water and pasture, in turn, increasing the risk of local resource conflicts.¹⁵ This is highly prevalent in communities that lack shared institutions for conflict resolution. Third, in some areas of central and southern Somalia, internally displaced persons are particularly vulnerable to identity-related conflicts and armed group recruitment. Armed groups such as al-Shabaab take advantage of climate impacts to recruit and train unemployed youth, expand their territorial scope and stronghold, and position themselves as service and relief providers following droughts and floods.¹⁶

Climate change-induced drought has multiple

security implications for the Horn. These security risks are highly intertwined and have non-linear relationships. For instance, environmental degradation exacerbates drought, causes economic and social dislocations, intensifies internal displacement and migration, and fuels disputes over resources.

IGAD: Responding to Climate Security Risks

IGAD is one of the newest sub-regional organisations in Africa, recognised by the African Union as its building block. IGAD was founded in 1996 to supersede the Inter-Governmental Authority against Drought and Desertification (IGADD). The latter was created in 1986 by the then drought-afflicted eastern African countries. The revitalisation of IGADD into IGAD produced a much broader mandate and more ambitious objectives that embrace cooperation in almost all socioeconomic, political, and environmental fields.

IGAD has several normative frameworks that guide its response to climate security risks. Three of the primary frameworks include the:

- Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI) of 2011, which promotes innovative sustainable development strategies, policies, and programmes at member state and regional levels to build resilience to future climatic and economic shocks
- Regional Migration Policy Framework (RMPF) of 2012, which attempts to address migration issues emerging from climate change and conflicts
- Regional Climate Change Security Strategy 2016–2030 (IRCCS), the first comprehensive IGAD policy framework on climate change, which covers four priority areas: creating an enabling environment to implement climate change strategy and actions; mainstreaming climate change strategies and actions in key economic sectors; creating regional capacity in climate-related knowledge generation and dissemination; and mitigation and low carbon development.

IGAD climate security actions and programming are implemented by three affiliated institutions: Agriculture and Environment Division; the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN); and the Climate Prediction and Application Centre (ICPAC). The Agriculture and Environment Division started in 1986 and has remained central to the IGAD mission. The division oversees IGAD work on agriculture, environmental protection, natural resource management, blue economy, and land governance.¹⁷ The division leads IGAD efforts in support of building resilience and sustainable development. CEWARN was launched in 2012 to gather data and report on dynamics that could potentially lead to violence or conflict to prevent escalation. Providing early warning on climate security risks is one of the main functions of CEWARN. ICPAC was officially opened on 27 October 2021. The centre provides climate services and early warnings beyond the IGAD member states to 11 East African countries. ICPAC designs and implements several projects and programmes on climate forecasting, disaster risk management, water resources, climate information dissemination, agriculture and food security, environmental monitoring, capacity development, and climate change.

IGAD established this internal infrastructure by adopting normative frameworks, creating institutions, and conducting research and outreach activities to take on a leading regional role on climate security topics. IGAD also plays an integral role in developing partnerships that improve organisational abilities to address regional climate security challenges. For example, with financial support from the European Union, IGAD launched a regional initiative in the Mandera triangle, which spans the border region of Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya that has experienced high levels of conflict, to address migration and climate change, as well as build the resilience of vulnerable communities to recurrent climate security challenges.¹⁸ This project is an example of environmental peacebuilding in action, which is a new concept and practice defined as managing natural resources in a way that promotes conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and inter-communal cooperation.¹⁹

In addition, IGAD works with UN agencies and development partners to deliver life-saving assistance to the segment of the population afflicted by drought. Although their assistance is insufficient to meet the level of need, the World Food Programme, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the UN International Children's Emergency Fund, and the United States Agency for International Development nonetheless

provide immediate life-saving food, livelihood, and nutrition support for populations experiencing acute food insecurity and malnutrition. Addressing climate security risks, however, requires actions beyond providing life-saving food assistance and intermittent community resilience-building projects.

Challenges to IGAD Initiatives

Despite its current institutional infrastructure and ongoing efforts to address regional climate security challenges, IGAD and its development partners have generally been slow to respond. Moreover, when responses are made, these interventions are insufficient. In part, this is a result of the formidable challenges IGAD faces in putting its policies into practice. Challenges persist unabated and their impact on responding to climate risks is profound. Some of the perpetual challenges IGAD faces include: a lack of adequate funds and resources; the deep-seated political culture of amity and enmity; the concentration of power in the Assembly of Heads of State and Government; and the limited power conferred to the IGAD secretariat. Membership of Horn states in several regional economic communities and the excessive penetration of external actors in regional security issues,²⁰ create overlapping jurisdictions and complicate IGAD work. It is useful to better understand the implications of these challenges and how they impact IGAD responses to climate security challenges in the region.

WEAK CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION AND INFORMATION SHARING

Climate security risks transcend national boundaries, making cross-border cooperation and information sharing crucial for responding to these risks. States in the Horn have, however, a weak track record of cooperation and information sharing. IGAD also lacks a robust normative framework and institutional arrangements for cross-border cooperation. The policy framework of the Nexus Between Informal Cross-Border Trade and Cross-Border Security Governance, which was endorsed in 2018, has several inadequacies. It also has a limited scope that is heavily focused on borderlands trade and security cooperation. Across the region, the deeply ingrained political culture of amity and enmity contributes to the lack of adequate cross-border cooperation and information sharing.²¹ The region has a history of using proxy forces in neighbouring countries to advance foreign policy interests.²² This aggravates inter-state rivalries, creates mistrust among IGAD member states, weakens cross-border cooperation and

information sharing, renders IGAD dysfunctional, and makes the region more vulnerable to climate security risks.

Due to high levels of political mistrust, IGAD power is concentrated in the assembly. The assembly itself is not immune to being stymied by political impasse. For instance, the political stalemate between Ethiopia and Sudan over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam²³ and their border dispute around the Al Fashaga Triangle, and the tensions between Kenya and Somalia over accusations of interference in domestic political affairs in 2020 and 2021, have negatively affected IGAD operations. These political dynamics make it challenging to build strong cross-border cooperation and information sharing in responding to climate security risks.

LIMITED ROOM FOR ENGAGING NON-STATE ACTORS

Non-state actors such as civil society organisations (CSOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), academia, and the private sector play a crucial role in researching, advocating, formulating, and implementing climate change-related policies, programmes, and projects. Since its inception, IGAD has been criticised for being too state centric. Until 2003, IGAD did not have a platform for the engagement of CSOs, NGOs, academia, or the private sector. In 2003, however, the Khartoum Declaration established the Civil Society and NGO Forum to involve non-state actors in policy formulation and implementation. The Khartoum Declaration is crucial to the implementation of IDDRSI, given the importance of civil society as a key stakeholder in the implementation of natural resource management, livelihood interventions, and other resilience-building initiatives.²⁴ Along with the forum, the IGAD Regional Civil Society Drylands Governance Facility was also established in December 2012. Between 2014 and 2016, this facility supported five NGOs in implementing various dryland resilience projects. Beyond its establishment and these intermittent practical attempts, the forum has proven limited in genuinely involving civil society, NGOs, or academia in IGAD work. IGAD lacks platforms that offer non-state actors opportunities to advocate for and present agendas to the assembly. IGAD also lacks a mechanism for permanent structured dialogue with CSOs, NGOs, academia, or the private sector.

LACK OF ADEQUATE EARLY PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS

Early prevention actions such as early warning systems, adaptive measures, and environmental peacebuilding are crucial for responding to climate change and preventing protracted conflicts. An early warning system is essential for implementing climate adaptation measures and building resilient communities. One major weakness in the Horn is the lack of adequate climate change-induced early warning systems, which consequently leads to poor implementation of adaptive measures. ICPAC was established to address this early warning deficit. A notable IGAD achievement, the centre is off to a promising start in terms of providing early warning signals to eastern African countries. After the early warnings are issued, the implementation of adaptive measures that encompass environmental peacebuilding should then increase the resilience of communities to climate change and conflicts—at least in theory. In practice, however, despite receiving these warnings, both IGAD and its member states have made little effort to implement adaptive measures such as reforestation and afforestation, crop diversification, integrating crops with livestock, improving natural resource management, protecting the cross-border mobility of pastoralists, and strengthening dispute resolution mechanisms. Moreover, across the region, there is a lack of projects and programmes that mainstream environmental peacebuilding. This magnifies inter and intra-communal violence over scarce resources. It also affects the resilience of communities to climate security risks.

MAKING HUMAN SECURITY THE DRIVING PRINCIPLE OF IGAD

IGAD is overly state centric. In contrast, climate security risks are indifferent to national and subnational boundaries. They also have severe human security implications. Political will and inter-state political coordination remain the primary barriers to the effectiveness of IGAD implementation. Focusing on human security as the driving principle of IGAD may set the organisation on a new course. For example, this could reduce substantial barriers to political will, open the door for the highest-level non-state actor engagement, and facilitate more cross-border cooperation and information sharing. Adopting human security as the driving principle of IGAD calls for two moves: 1) an agreement that established IGAD and other subsequent documents and institutional arrangements be amended to reflect this change; and/or 2) a gradual broadening of the IGAD mandate to emphasise non-traditional security

issues such as climate change, resource scarcity, infectious diseases, natural disasters, irregular migration, food shortages, and organised crime. The latter is similar to changes made to the driving principles of the United Nations Security Council and the European Union.

Along with making human security the driving principle of IGAD, member states must also confer considerable autonomous power to the IGAD secretariat. IGAD needs to be transformed from an intergovernmental body into a supranational organisation with autonomous decision-making power. This reform must be carried out in a way that promotes trust among IGAD member states.

ENHANCING THE ENGAGEMENT OF NON-STATE ACTORS IN CORE IGAD MISSIONS

Involving CSOs, NGOs, academia, or the private sector would greatly help IGAD to gain local insights, support implementation, and raise more awareness of its work. IGAD should revamp the current platform/forum in a way that fosters a permanent structured dialogue with non-state actors and encourages these actors to advocate for and table issues before the highest IGAD decision-making body, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. Creating direct relationships with non-state actors working on climate change would increase civil society engagement and reduce the barriers to cross-border cooperation and information sharing that IGAD faces, paving the way for the development of a climate change-resilient environment and community. The engagement of non-state actors necessitates a paradigm shift that ultimately makes these actors the holders of core IGAD mandates and missions.

IMPROVING CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION AND COORDINATION

In the twenty-first century, cross-border coordination and cooperation are becoming more informal and decentralised. Conventional diplomatic protocol is being challenged. IGAD has to take a lesson from this experience to develop an innovative and open system of cooperation in a way that improves direct linkages with member states, inter-member states, CSOs, NGOs, academia, and the general public. This necessitates a comprehensive and binding normative framework and institutional arrangement. The only legally enforceable instruments that IGAD has adopted to govern cross-border cooperation and information sharing are the conventions on extradition and mutual legal assistance. Both conventions, however, mainly address criminal matters. Moreover,

only Djibouti and Ethiopia have ratified them. IGAD should therefore develop a comprehensive framework for cross-border collaboration, which IGAD member states then adopt and ratify so this instrument is legally enforceable.

STRENGTHENING EARLY PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS

Addressing climate security risks necessitates implementing an early warning system and undertaking adaptive measures that embrace environmental peacebuilding. A successful early warning system saves lives, livelihoods, and infrastructure and provides long-term sustainability. Climate change-related early warning systems that commenced at the end of 2021 have to be strengthened by improving the capacities (finance, technology, and human resources) of the multi-hazard early warning situation rooms at ICPAC, connecting them to CEWARN, and working to establish dedicated situation rooms in IGAD member states. To this end, IGAD should allocate an adequate budget and solicit the support of its member states and development partners to establish these situation rooms.

An early warning system is required to undertake adaptive measures for climate change. Such measures encompass the implementation of several programmes that enable societies to withstand the impacts of climate change. These adaptive measures must take existing social, political, and economic tensions into account and avoid exacerbating them. Thus, IGAD, along with its member states and development partners, should better understand and expand the scope and scale of climate-smart resilience investments, such as the Manderla triangle. The project implemented in the Manderla triangle is an adaptive measure that includes environmental peacebuilding, which eventually serves to improve community resilience to drought and conflict. Advancing projects that encompass environmental peacebuilding in the resource conflict hot spots across the region would be an immense contribution to peace and sustainable development in the Horn. The presence of similar communities in the borderlands of Horn countries creates an appealing environment for the implementation of such projects.

Conclusion and Recommendations

IGAD faces formidable challenges in putting its policies into practice. In addition to the challenges of political will and lack of adequate finance for climate security risks, IGAD is beset by weak cross-border cooperation and information sharing, limited non-state actors engagement, and shortcomings in how its early warning system informs the implementation of adaptive measures that encompass environmental peacebuilding. These challenges create a dilemma. On the one hand, IGAD possesses solid normative frameworks and institutional arrangements (albeit in need of some degree of reform), but on the other, it lacks the means to put these policies into practice. To constructively respond to the security risks triggered by climate change, IGAD, therefore, needs to:

address organisational bottlenecks; implement adaptive measures that are informed by an early warning system and encompass environmental peacebuilding; and enhance the engagement of non-state actors in core IGAD missions.

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