

ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRATION, DISASTER DISPLACEMENT AND PLANNED RELOCATION IN WEST AFRICA



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This publication was made possible through the generous support provided to IOM by the Government of the French Republic in the context of its Chairmanship of the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) for the IOM project, Implementing Global Policies on Environmental Migration and Disaster Displacement in West Africa. The information presented is updated as of September 2020.

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Cover photo: Woman in agriculture in the village of Kothiary, Tambacounda, in the south of Senegal.
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Required citation: International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2021. *Environmental Migration, Disaster Displacement and Planned Relocation in West Africa*. IOM. Geneva.

ISBN 978-92-9268-069-5 (PDF)

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Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by Christina Daszkiewicz, a consultant with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), under the supervision of its Migration, Environment and Climate Change (MECC) Division, and in partnership with the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD).

At IOM, the overall production and revision of this report were conducted and managed by Ileana Sinziana Pușcaș, Programme Officer at the MECC Division, under the overall direction of the Head of Division, Dina Ionesco. Other IOM colleagues who reviewed and provided invaluable inputs to this report include:

- (a) From the MECC Division: Alice Baillat, MECC Associate Expert and Liaison Officer at the Platform on Disaster Displacement; Hind Aïssaoui Bennani, MECC Regional Thematic Specialist for West and Central Africa; and Anna-Gaëlle Chesnier-Piña, MECC Consultant for West and Central Africa;
- (b) From the IOM Regional Office for West and Central Africa in Dakar, Senegal: Sophie Nonnenmacher, Senior Regional Policy and Liaison Officer; Damien Jusselme, Regional Information Management Officer; Sarah Carl, Regional Policy and Liaison Officer; and Nassima Clerin, Senior Regional Migrant Assistant Specialist;
- (c) From the IOM Country Office of Nigeria: Farah Mohamed, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer; and Prestage Murima, Programme Development Coordinator.

At the PDD, this report was produced with support from Sarah Koeltzow, Policy Officer at the PDD Secretariat; and Atle Solberg, Head of the PDD Secretariat.

This report has also benefited from a review by and inputs from Ibrahim Peghouma and Florence Geoffroy of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); Kanta Kumari Rigaud and David Maleki of the World Bank; Patrick Auffret of the French Permanent Mission to the United Nations Organizations in Geneva; and the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Global Network.

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Acronyms

3S Initiative	Sustainability, Stability and Security Initiative
ARSDRR	Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States (French: <i>Communauté des États Sahélo-Sahariens</i>)
CILSS	Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (French: <i>Comité Permanent Inter-État de Lutte contre La Sécheresse au Sahel</i>)
DRR	disaster risk reduction
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FMM	Free Movement and Migration West Africa Project
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP(s)	internally displaced person(s)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LCBC	Lake Chad Basin Commission
LDC	least developed country
LLDC	landlocked developing country
MECC	migration, environment and climate change
MIDWA	Migration Dialogue for West Africa
MIEUX	Mlgration EU eXpertise
NAP	national adaptation plan (for climate change)
ND-GAIN	Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative

OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PDD	Platform on Disaster Displacement
RCP	regional consultative process
REC	regional economic community
SDG(s)	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SWAC	Sahel and West Africa Club
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UN-OHRLLS	United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	(Office of the) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNISS	United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel
UNSP	United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel

Introduction



Source: United Nations Geospatial Information Section, 2014.

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

The IOM subregion of West Africa comprises 16 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo (see Annex A). All 16 countries are part of the Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA). Only 15 are current members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), since Mauritania, a founding member, withdrew its membership in 2000. All 16 countries are also Member States of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), with 9 of them also members of the Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) – namely, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo. Senegal is a member of the Steering Group of the State-led Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD). Twelve of these 16 countries are also part of the Sahel geographical area (as defined by the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, and the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS (French: *Comité Permanent Inter-État de Lutte contre La Sécheresse au Sahel*)) (Office of the Special Envoy for the Sahel, n.d.; CILSS, n.d.): Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Senegal and Togo. Finally, the subregion includes 12 coastal countries (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo), 3 landlocked countries (Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger) and 1 island country (Cabo Verde). Of these countries, 9 are francophone (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire,

Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Senegal and Togo); 5 are anglophone (the Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone); and 2 are lusophone (Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau).

The West Africa subregion has a high number of least developed countries (LDCs), with 12 of its 16 countries falling under this category: Benin, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo (only Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Ghana are not LDCs). Three States are landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), namely Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger; two are small island developing States (SIDS), namely Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau. Some States in the subregion are among the most vulnerable to climate change: the Niger, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Mali rank among the 10 most vulnerable countries in the world, with Nigeria also among the 10 least ready to adapt (University of Notre Dame, 2019).¹ The Programme of Action for LDCs for the Decade 2011–2020, the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs, and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway all acknowledge the vulnerability of these States to the adverse effects of climate change. In particular, the 2011–2020 Programme of Action for LDCs called the international community to “help least developed countries address the challenges [relating to the] livelihood and food security and health of the people affected by the adverse impact[s] of climate change and respond to the needs of the people displaced as a result of extreme weather events, where appropriate, at [the] national, regional and international levels” (UN-OHRLS, 2011, p. 82).

West Africa has a long history of human mobility. The subregion has the largest international migrant stock on the continent, with some 7.4 million in 2019 (UN DESA, 2019). While majority of human mobility in the subregion is motivated by economic factors, there are other intervening drivers, such as conflict and disasters, climate change, and environmental degradation. Over the last few decades, the subregion has been facing flooding and drought with regularity. Coastal erosion, land degradation and water scarcity are among the biggest environmental trends affecting its 16 countries.

In 2019, approximately 328,000 people were displaced within their countries in disaster contexts in West Africa (IDMC, 2020a, pp. 102–104). Projections also put West Africa among those most strongly affected by environmental changes in the future (Brüning and Piguët, 2018, p. 16). The World Bank also projects that 54.4 million people could become internal migrants by 2050, mostly in the context of slow-onset impacts of climate change in West Africa if no climate action is taken (Rigaud et al., 2018, p. 109). Several examples of planned relocation from coastal areas have also been mapped. The West Africa subregion also needs specific attention due to the prevalence of agriculture in its economy and the fact that majority of its rural population depends on land and rain-fed agriculture, both of which are affected by disasters, climate change and environmental degradation (de Longueville et al., 2020, p. 1).

Several global policy frameworks, in particular those related to migration management, climate change, and disaster risk reduction, address the links between population movements and environmental drivers, including the protection needs of people on the move in these contexts. These frameworks include the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the Paris Agreement, and the Sendai Framework. A multitude of frameworks also exist at the African (i.e. regional) level and at the West African (i.e. subregional) level, in addition to the nationally adopted frameworks, including the ones developed within the contexts of the African Union and ECOWAS.

¹ Vulnerability is a measure of a country's exposure, sensitivity and ability to adapt to the negative impacts of climate change. The Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN) Country Index measures overall vulnerability by considering vulnerability in six life-supporting sectors: food, water, health, ecosystem service, human habitat and infrastructure. Readiness is a measure of a country's ability to leverage investments and convert them to adaptation actions. The ND-GAIN Country Index measures overall readiness by considering three components – economic readiness, governance readiness and social readiness (University of Notre Dame, 2019).

The implementation of global policies at the regional, subregional, national and local levels, combined with the operationalization of existing frameworks at these levels, could provide the needed action, assistance and protection for people moving in contexts of disasters, adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation.

Political and strategic responses developed at the regional and subregional levels are key to finding solutions for both people who choose to stay and those on the move in contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation (IOM, 2007). Strong regional dialogue and governance can facilitate policy coherence at the regional and national levels, in that States can identify their shared interests, taking into consideration the specific factors unique to their region (PDD, 2018; Dick and Schraven, 2018, p. 7). As most movements take place within the subregion, States can converge towards specific priorities more easily at this level. The importance of the regional and subregional levels in addressing and managing human mobility in contexts of disasters, in addition to the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation, is emphasized throughout the Global Compact for Migration.²

The present desk review aims to inform policymakers, decision makers and practitioners from the local to the global level, about the interplay between migration, displacement, planned relocation and disasters, climate change and environmental degradation in West Africa, and the policy framework to address it. As such, the paper first provides an overview of human mobility in West Africa in contexts of disasters, adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation. It then presents policy horizons, including relevant global, regional and subregional policies. Finally, the paper concludes with recommendations for States, the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and civil society to address human mobility in contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation in West Africa.

This desk review is part of the IOM project, Implementing Global Policies on Environmental Migration and Disaster Displacement in West Africa (IOM, 2020a). IOM is implementing the project with the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD), with the generous support of the Government of France, which served as Chair and Vice-Chair of the PDD in 2019–2020 and 2021, respectively. The objective of this project is to support States in West Africa in their efforts to minimize displacement and facilitate regular migration pathways in contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation. The project promotes policy development and seeks to foster coherence among policies related to environmental migration and disaster displacement in the subregion. The project supports States in the subregion in implementing their commitments, as set out in the Global Compact for Migration and the African Union's Three-Year Implementation Plan of Action for the Global Compact for Migration in Africa 2020–2022 (African Union, 2019b). It is also aligned with commitments made in the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC, 2015) together with the Task Force on Displacement Plan of Action 2019–2021 (UNFCCC, 2019), under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); and in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (UNGA, 2015), together with its Programme of Action for the Implementation in Africa (African Union, 2017a). To achieve this, the project is focused on four pillars, in line with relevant global policy priorities of States: (a) data and evidence, (b) policy dialogue, (c) community action and (d) communication. This desk review was commissioned by IOM under the first pillar of the project on data and evidence.

² See Objective 2 (paragraph 18.k) and Objective 5 (paragraph 21.g) of the Global Compact for Migration (UNGA, 2018a).

IOM has been working on the migration, environment and climate change (MECC) nexus since the 1990s, pursuing three broad objectives relating to: (a) solutions for people to stay: minimizing forced migration; (b) solutions for people on the move: assisting and protecting people when forced migration does occur; and (c) solutions for people to move: facilitate migration to adapt to a changing climate (IOM, 2014, p. 12). IOM focuses on conducting research on the MECC nexus, building the capacity of policymakers, supporting policy coherence and development, and operational response in disaster situations and with migrant communities. IOM acts at the local, national, subregional, regional and global levels, through its 174 Member States and 8 Observer States, and more than 430 offices in over 150 countries, including in the 16 West African States. IOM is also engaged in a number of State-led partnerships, including the Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Initiative and the PDD.

The PDD is a State-led initiative established in 2016 to follow-up on the work of the Nansen Initiative. It supports the implementation of the recommendations of the Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change (Protection Agenda), endorsed by 109 States in October 2015 (Nansen Initiative, 2015, p. 7). Its overall objective is to “support States and other stakeholders to strengthen the protection of persons displaced across borders in the context of disasters and the adverse effects of climate change, and to prevent or reduce disaster displacement risks in countries of origin” (PDD, 2019a, p. 2). IOM, together with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), is a member of the PDD Steering Group and a key partner of PDD, and plays a key role in supporting States’ efforts to implement the Protection Agenda and the priorities identified by the PDD member States, which are directly in line with IOM’s vision and action on addressing migration associated with disasters, climate change and environmental degradation.

1. Overview of human mobility in West Africa in contexts of disasters, adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation

Reliable evidence and a better understanding of the complexity of human mobility in contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation remain central to identifying adequate solutions for people and governments. Despite persistent data gaps in the subregion, several countries in West Africa have attracted a lot of research on the MECC nexus (Ionesco et al., 2017, p. 11). The following sections will give a brief overview of environmental migration, disaster displacement, and planned relocation dynamics in West Africa. To structure this overview, the conceptual framework is first presented.

1.1. Key concepts

Human mobility in contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation takes various forms: temporary or permanent; forced or voluntary; in proximity or at a longer distance; and internal or international (Ionesco et al., 2017). For many, mobility means resilience and adaptation to the environment; for others, it means danger and vulnerability due to the environment, making movement both a solution and a problem. While this paper focuses on mobility, it must also be remembered that many are trapped in contexts where disasters, natural hazards, adverse effects of climate change or environmental degradation put them in danger (IOM, 2014, p. 7), others have the opportunity to move but do not want to leave their homes behind, and still others do not have the means nor the opportunity to move at all.

The understanding of human mobility in this desk review is in line with the 2010 Cancun Climate Change Adaptation Framework, which identifies in its paragraph 14(f) three types of human mobility for purposes of climate change adaptation: “climate change induced displacement, migration and planned relocation” (UNFCCC, 2010, p. 4). “Displacement” refers to predominantly forced movements; “migration”, to predominantly voluntary movements (IOM, 2019b); and “planned relocation”, to moving or assisting to move people to protect them from risks and impacts related to disasters and environmental change (Georgetown University et al., 2017; IOM, 2019b). While displacement is usually temporary, but can be protracted or repeated, migration is either temporary or permanent, and planned relocation is usually permanent (IOM, 2019b). While displacement and migration can be either internal and international, planned relocation is usually internal (Ibid.).

Although these distinctions are theoretically appropriate, they are not always representative of reality, as population movements occur on a continuum from forced to voluntary, and from temporary to permanent (Ionesco et al., 2017). The distinction between forced and voluntary movement is particularly difficult to determine, especially in the context of slow-onset environmental and climate processes, and would be better described as a spectrum rather than a strict dichotomy (Hugo, 1996). It is also challenging to categorize the geographic scope of people’s movements, with some people moving within close proximity of their homes but in a different country, and others moving within their country but covering a large distance. Notwithstanding the difficulties, classifying movements is important, as the type of movement determines the rights and obligations that people have, the actors interacting with them, and, sometimes, the level of their acceptance by the host community.

As regards the drivers of population movements, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, in its Objective 2, identifies adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave, as follows: “sudden-onset and slow-onset natural disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, environmental degradation” (UNGA, 2018a, p. 10). Sudden-onset events happen quickly or unexpectedly, while slow-onset events and processes develop gradually and can have effects over a long period of time. Sudden-onset events can be linked to hydrometeorological hazards, including tropical cyclones, floods, drought, heatwaves, cold spells and coastal storm surges; geophysical hazards, including earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions; or drivers of environmental hazards and risks, including soil degradation, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, salinization and sea-level rise (UNDRR, 2020). Slow-onset events and processes can be linked to sea-level rise, increasing temperatures, ocean acidification, glacial retreat and related impacts, salinization, land and forest degradation, loss of biodiversity, and desertification (UNFCCC, 2010). Climate change and environmental degradation exacerbate such events and processes.

While there are distinctions between sudden-onset and slow-onset hazards, these are often intertwined. The impacts of slow-onset events can translate into sudden-onset disasters, as in the example of sea-level rise turning into flooding. In addition, multiple hazards can happen at the time, as in the case of an earthquake resulting in landslides and flooding (e.g. from a leak in a ruptured dam), or coastal erosion that leads to salinization. At the same time, it is never only environmental drivers that determine whether people would move; there are often multiple context-specific drivers working together to shape mobility decisions (Ionesco et al., 2017, p. 37). With this complex multicausality, no single or main driver can be identified, nor is it possible to always disentangle one driver from another. A combination of social, political, economic, environmental and demographic factors is often at the root of migration decision-making (Ionesco et al., 2017, p. 37). On top of these considerations, it is also essential to account for people’s perceptions of disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation, as they influence decision-making (de Longueville et al., 2020, p. 15). Responses to human mobility in contexts of disasters, adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation, at both the policy and operational levels, reflect this complexity, with some 28 policies, processes and other frameworks addressing this nexus at the international level alone (IOM, 2018a).

1.2. Trends in West Africa

West Africa has a long history of human mobility. Political and economic structures imposed by colonial regimes in the subregion, such as tax regimes and territorial boundaries that physically divided ethnic communities, have altered the traditional free movement of people (Adepoju, 2005, p. 1). However, West Africa is still one of the most mobile areas in the world, with around 7.4 million intraregional migrants in 2019 (UN DESA, 2019). Intraregional mobility constitutes the main type of migration and mixed-migration routes³ in West Africa: in 2019, 70 per cent of West African migrants migrated to another West African country; 96 per cent of all migrants in the subregion were from another West African country (UN DESA, 2020). The IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix informs that a total of 96 per cent of all migration flows from the subregion in 2019 and 2020 were towards another country in West Africa; most of the remaining 4 per cent were to North African countries. Movements to Europe made up an even smaller proportion of flows from the subregion.

³ Mixed-migration flows can be identified by “the irregular nature of and the multiplicity of factors driving such movements, and the differentiated needs and profiles of the persons involved. Complex population movements including refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants and other migrants, unaccompanied minors, environmental migrants, smuggled persons, victims of trafficking and stranded migrants, among others, may also form part of a mixed flow”. (IOM, 2008, p. 2).

Labour migration within West Africa attracts millions of people every year, with most heading towards large, dynamic economic areas requiring significant manpower in sectors such as mining, farming, fishing and forestry. Transhumance also puts millions of herders and their cattle on migration routes across the region every year. Intraregional seasonal migration has been a response to rainfall variability and periodic drought in the subregion for a long time (de Longueville et al., 2020, p. 1). The high volume of intraregional migration can be explained by the visa-free movement regime of ECOWAS member States (based on the ECOWAS Protocol on the Free Movement of People and Goods), as well as the relatively small size of many of these States, across which the West Africa's ethnic groups have spun extended, transnational networks (IOM, 2019a, p. 64).

Internal and international migration dynamics are shaped by environmental and climatic changes in West Africa (Zickgraf et al., 2016, p. 1). As in most parts of the world, sudden- and slow-onset events and processes interact in West Africa, creating environmental drivers of migration. The subregion has been subject to strong changes related to rainfall variability, increasing temperatures, and much more frequent and severe events and processes such as sea-level rise, flooding and drought. Coastal erosion, land degradation and water scarcity are also among the biggest environmental trends affecting the 16 countries of the subregion. These hazards can also be accelerated and enhanced by the adverse effects of climate change.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in its first assessment report, already considered West Africa to be an area of the world where agriculture was most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change (IPCC, 1990, p. 93). The frequency and intensity of disasters has increased in West Africa over the last few decades, and the trend is expected to continue (IPCC, 2012, pp. 143, 147 and 171). Besides being projected to be among those most affected by environmental changes in the future (Brüning and Piguet, 2018, p. 16), the West Africa subregion will need specific attention due to the prevalence of agriculture in its economy, with majority of its rural population depending on these resources (de Longueville et al., 2020, p. 1). This becomes even more important given the prediction that hazards will continue to increase and a global warming of 1.5°C will accentuate the current adverse effects of climate change (IPCC, 2018, p. 178).

The World Bank projects an annual average of 54.4 million people moving internally by 2050 in West Africa, mostly in the context of slow-onset impacts of climate change, if no climate action is taken. According to these projections, 38.5 million people would move in a more inclusive development scenario and 17.9 million in a more climate-friendly scenario (Rigaud et al., 2018, p. 109). To put these figures in context, West Africa had a population of 401 million in 2020 (UN DESA, 2020).

What is more, the impacts of climate change are not fenced by country borders, thus contributing to cross-border population movements. There are approximately 32,000 km of international land borders in West Africa (OECD, 2017, p. 7), with over half of the total urban population (as of 2015) living less than 100 km from one of these borders (OECD, 2019, p. 13). Many conflicts and terrorist activities displace populations across borders. Conflict can combine with climate change impacts in so-called "hotspots", which are located mainly in the Sahel (United Nations Environment Programme, 2011, pp. 50–51). Together, they shape mobility trends in West Africa unique to the subregion (Gemenne et al., 2017, p. 318).

In 2019, there were approximately 328,000 new disaster-induced internal displacements in West Africa (IDMC, 2020a, pp. 102–104). This estimate, however, does not include the many more people moving in the context of slow-onset events and processes linked to the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation. In addition, even though cross-border displacement in the subregion is well recognized, data and case studies of people crossing borders in disaster contexts are lacking, partly because of the ECOWAS free movement regime (ECOWAS, 1979).

In 2019, there were 1.15 million new internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the context of conflict (IDMC, 2020a, pp. 102–104) alongside 348,166 refugees in the subregion (UNHCR, 2019). As of 31 December 2019, around 3.9 million people in West Africa remained in a situation of internal displacement due to conflict (IDMC, 2020a, pp. 102–104). Differentiating between conflict and disasters as triggers, however, is not representative of reality, as the interrelationships between the drivers of population movements is far more complex (Ionesco et al., 2017, pp. 34–69). As previously explained, the factors that lead people to move constitute a complex web; this is true as well for West Africa, where several drivers, including social, political, economic, environmental and demographic factors, converge at the root of any displacement or decision to migrate (Ionesco et al., 2017, p. 37).

1.3. Environmental migration in West Africa

As mentioned in the previous section, West Africa has the largest stock of migrants – some 7.4 million – on the continent, (UN DESA, 2019). Majority of migration is intraregional and mostly between neighbouring countries. The predominant movement in the subregion is from north to south – that is, from the landlocked countries of the Sahel (e.g. Mali, Burkina Faso, the Niger and Chad) to the coast (e.g. Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and the Gambia) (African Union, 2016, p. 17), and from rural areas to urban centres (Brüning and Piguët, 2018, p. 16).

1.3.1. Circular migration, agriculture and drought

Agriculture is an important pillar of West Africa's economy, representing 43.5 per cent of employment in the subregion and 25.5 per cent of its GDP (calculated from World Development Indicators 2020 data (World Bank, 2020)). However, West Africa is considered one of the world's most vulnerable regions in relation to the impacts of climate change. Forecasters agree that the frequency and intensity of flooding and drought, which will impact agricultural production and food security, will increase (ECOWAS, 2015a, p. 30). In rural areas, where agriculture is the main source of economic revenue, migration can become an adaptation strategy when farming is no longer an option and if local adaptation strategies are limited. Intraregional migration in West Africa has, thus, been a common response to rainfall variability for a long time (van der Land et al., 2018, p. 174). Several countries in West Africa suffering from periodic drought, such as Mali and Ghana, see seasonal migration being used as a strategy by households and communities to diversify income during drought periods (Ionesco et al., 2017, pp. 44 and 65). Research also shows that excessive precipitation in Senegal is contributing to international migration, while heatwaves in Burkina Faso are decreasing the probability of international migration, which might lead to people being trapped (Nawrotzki and Bakhtsiyarava, 2017).

Research on rainfall variability in Ghana by Afifi et al. (2016, p. 268) showed that “traditional migration in response to temporary food shortages during dry season has increasingly shifted towards the rainy season”. As migration in this case happens during main farming activities, it is difficult for people left behind to handle these farming activities in the absence of the needed manpower. These left-behind households face the risk of higher levels of vulnerability and food insecurity, especially if migrants are not able to contribute financially back home through remittances (Afifi et al., 2016, p. 263).

This form of migration usually lasts only a short period of time and takes place over short distances, from rural areas to cities mainly and sometimes undertaken for international seasonal work (Ionesco et al., 2017, p. 44). However, while circular and short-distance migration might increase in times of drought, several studies have shown that long-distance migration to destinations such as cities, including those abroad, tends to decrease, as people lack the capital to embark on long-distance migration (Vigil, 2017, p. 59; IOM and UNCCD, 2019). Zickgraf (2018a) highlights that, in addition to limitations due to financial and social resources, “generally speaking, poor(er) groups, the low-skilled, women, the elderly and children are less likely to migrate, and in the event of displacement, they are more likely to become trapped in transit”.

Women, who are often left behind because they are less likely to move, are also negatively affected by access to land rights, particularly in rural areas (ECOWAS, 2020, p. 30). As rules governing property and transfer of land ownership are less favourable to women (Chimhowu, 2019, p. 900), when a man leaves or dies, women and other family members are often left without land (ECOWAS, 2020, p. 30). Securing land rights is therefore critical to decreasing displacement by providing options to adapt and stay in places of origin (IOM and UNCCD, 2019, p. 23).

It is important to note, however, that the aforementioned trends that negatively impact women and children are declining as women in rural households increasingly migrate, often taking turns migrating and staying home with other family members (van der Land et al., 2018, p. 173). Women increasingly migrate, seemingly for the same economic reasons as men. Van der Land et al. (2018, p. 170) highlight that it is unclear whether this change is due to deteriorating environmental conditions or to an increasing acceptance of the migration of women for economic reasons.



Farmers from the village of Kothiary in Tambacounda, South Senegal. © Alioune NDIAYE/IOM 2018

1.3.2. Changes in pastoralism and natural resources-related tensions

Environmental changes can also affect other mobility patterns in West Africa (Brüning and Piguet, 2018, p. 16). In the context of pastoralism, there is a long tradition of internal and international mobility related to seasonal variability in the Sahel region (Vigil, 2017, p. 56–57). African pastoralism has been defined as “a high reliance on livestock as a source of economic and social well-being, and [on] various types of strategic mobility to access water and grazing resources in areas of high rainfall variability” (African Union, 2010, p. 6). Pastoralism relies on an agreement between farmers and herders for the former to give the latter free access to fields after the harvest season. However, structural changes in the agricultural system, as well as coastal countries’ determination to decrease their dependency on Sahelian meat imports, along with the adverse effects of climate change, are now challenging pastoralism (ECOWAS, 2015a, p. 15) and contributing to growing tensions around the sharing of natural resources. Traditional transhumance corridors are affected by disasters, adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation. The instability and lack of rainfall, which lead to drought, pushes, for example, many Nigerian and Malian pastoralists in search of grazing land to drive their herds, usually further South or towards neighbouring coastal countries during the wet season (IOM, 2019b, pp. 27 and 47). In northern Benin, tensions have been reported between local populations and Nigerian pastoralists over grazing land for their herds (Zickgraf, 2019, p. 357). These tensions also need to be understood in the context of long-standing ethnic conflicts. In Nigeria, for example, such conflicts between Fulani pastoralists and Hausa farmers in the north-western states of Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara led to new displacements in 2019, with approximately 178,000 people still displaced across the three states by the end of the year (IDMC, 2020a, p. 18).

1.3.3. Migration, environment, climate change and conflict

The disproportionate impacts of climate change can result in increasing local competition for natural resources, particularly food and water. However, such impacts should be considered as being linked to other factors, including political choices in the allocation of access to natural resources – which can be a root cause of conflict (International Crisis Group, 2020, p. 7). The combined effects of climate change, including extreme weather episodes of drought and flooding, and armed conflicts are among the leading causes of displacement across the Sahel. In addition, the loss of livelihoods means that non-State armed groups are finding space and momentum to expand their influence.

Environmental factors can also act as a threat multiplier for conflict and instability, fuelling further humanitarian crises and displacement. With competition for scarce resources increasing and social cohesion and leadership structures changing, traditional mediation and coping mechanisms are also at risk of collapsing. For instance, many local leaders have left their traditional places of residence, rendering local agreements between pastoralists, herders and farmers on issues relating to water, husbandry and grazing areas more difficult to achieve. This has led to the emergence of many community-based self-defence armed groups.

A known example of human mobility driven by both environmental changes and conflict is observed around the Lake Chad region, an area dramatically affected by prolonged drought that, together with the overuse of water, resulted in the lake drastically shrinking in the 1980s (Pham-Duc et al., 2020, p. 1). The resulting competition for resources, combined with a lack of investment in access to health and education services, along with widespread poverty, inequality and political marginalization, has led to intercommunal violence in the region. The situation is one of the backbones for the emergence of insurgent groups such as Boko Haram (Nett and Rüttinger, 2016, p. 14). Such a convergence of drivers forces communities to flee and can lead to protracted displacement (UNHRC, 2018).

1.4. Disaster-induced internal displacement in West Africa

There were around 328,000 new disaster-induced internal displacements in West Africa in 2019 (IDMC, 2020a, pp. 102–104). The prior 12 years (2008–2019), however, witnessed a high degree of fluctuation of this number: in 2018, for example, the number of new IDPs was more than double compared to that in 2017, with some 787,000 new displacements recorded in the region, mainly due to floods in Nigeria;⁴ the figure for the year before, 2017, was around 370,000 (IDMC, 2019a, pp. 118–120; see Annex B). The highest number estimated was in 2012, with some 4.48 million people newly displaced in disaster contexts, also mainly due to floods in Nigeria, which displaced some 3.9 million. Some of this variation may also be explained by methodological issues in estimating these numbers, which have led to incomplete data, as explained in this section.

Floods, heavy rains and tidal surges

In 2018, 80 per cent of Nigeria was affected by flooding that resulted in 613,000 new internal displacements (IDMC, 2019a, p. 119). This number represented around 78 per cent of the total displacements by disasters in West Africa, putting Nigeria among the 10 most disaster-affected countries in the world during that year. The country is the most highly populated country not only in West Africa, but on the entire African continent (IDMC, 2019b, p. 22). It is highly exposed to disasters, mainly floods, partly due to the inundation of major rivers, such as the Niger and the Benue, during the rainy season, and, in fact, has the highest flood displacement risk of any African country (IDMC, 2019b, p. 22).

To compare, Nigeria had 157,000 people newly displaced by disasters in 2019 (IDMC, 2020a, p. 119). The country was also the scene of secondary displacement in August 2019, when inland flooding destroyed shelters in the city of Maiduguri. The 6,800 people living in those shelters, who had previously been displaced by conflict, were therefore displaced for a second time (IDMC, 2019b, p. 20). The following year, in 2020, at least 19 displacement camps were in high-flooding-risk areas in north-eastern Nigeria (IDMC, 2019c). In September 2020, torrential rains displaced 215,833 people in the country (IDMC, 2020b).

Flooding also led to new internal displacements in other countries in 2018 – around 56,000 in Ghana, 15,000 in Liberia and 3,000 in Côte d'Ivoire. The September 2020 torrential rains led to the displacement of 298 families in Guinea (*Guineematin.com*, 2020) and 3,300 people in Senegal (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2020). Senegal's Minister for Water and Sanitation, Serigne Mbaye Thiam, stated that the equivalent of three months of cumulative rain during a typical rainy season fell in just seven hours (*Al Jazeera*, 2020).

In Freetown, Sierra Leone, floods and a landslide led to 11,800 new internal displacements in 2017 (IDMC, 2019b, p. 20). In August 2019, 5,300 new internal displacements were triggered by torrential rains and floods, mostly in precarious neighbourhoods. Both events were intensified by informal urban settlements, together with deforestation on the slopes around the city (IDMC, 2019b, p. 20).

The South Dayi District of Ghana's Volta Region was subject to small-scale displacement following a rainstorm in June 2020, when 30 houses were destroyed and 70 people were displaced (GhanaWeb, 2020a). The displaced people lodged with relatives and friends. In July 2020, heavy rains hit the region again, displacing 70 people and destroying 10 houses in the Akatsi South District (GhanaWeb, 2020b). Much road infrastructure was also destroyed, cutting off the affected community.

⁴ Nigeria had a population of around 201 million in 2019 (UN DESA, 2020), approximately half the population of the West Africa subregion.

1.5. Planned relocation in West Africa⁵

Initiatives and discussions are underway in West Africa to conduct planned relocation in contexts of disasters, adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation. These primarily concern the subregion's coastal countries and are supported by international partners. As a basic principle, "planned relocation should be used as a measure of last resort, after other risk reduction and/or adaptation options have been considered in a timely manner and reasonably exhausted" (Georgetown University, UNHCR and IOM, 2017, p. 6).

1.5.1. Planned relocation, coastal erosion and fishing communities

Approximately 105 million people live in the coastal areas of West Africa. A combination of slow-onset processes such as coastal erosion, land degradation and sea-level rise, and sudden-onset hazards such as floods, storms and tidal surges, are threatening local populations' livelihoods and pressuring them to relocate. In Côte d'Ivoire, rapid urbanization, construction of infrastructure in coastal areas, mining activities, mangrove deforestation and unregulated waste disposal all contribute to coastline recession. This phenomenon is not recent, and planned relocation has been used in the past to respond to it. In 1975, the coastal town of Grand-Lahou in Côte d'Ivoire, was relocated 15 km inland. The town was built on a sandy barrier beach at the mouth of the Bandama River and had suffered damages since the 1920s (Alves et al., 2020, p. 13). Nevertheless, not all residents of Grand-Lahou agreed to relocate, and some of the existing fishing communities preferred to remain by the coast to maintain their traditional livelihood. Despite this voluntary decision to remain immobile, these communities, which live in now-at-risk areas are regularly forced to move homes (*Jeune Afrique*, 2018). The West Africa Coastal Areas Management Program (WACA) of the World Bank has selected Grand-Lahou as its first participating pilot community (WACA, n.d.).

The Keta basin, located on the Volta River estuary in Ghana, presents another example of planned relocation related to coastal erosion. Erosion in the basin started sometime between 1870 and 1880 (UNESCO International Oceanographic Commission, 2012, p. 13), but the construction of a dam on the river in 1965, which interfered with sedimentation along the coast, increased the erosion. Since then, protection methods to stabilize the coast have been mostly unsuccessful; in fact, the construction of the Keta sea defence wall and accompanying breakwaters contributed to the increase in coastal erosion. Successive governments considered and attempted resettling highly vulnerable communities from Keta, but failed due to these communities' attachment to the land and traditional livelihood (Codjoe et al., 2020, p. 92). A first resettlement of three communities from the Keta area – Adzido, Vodza and Kedzi – was finally started in 1999 in the context of the construction of the sea defence wall. The resettlement was completed in 2004. However, the resettled communities considered the project to have "not achieved its set target," as they were dissatisfied that important cultural and family considerations were not made during the process (Danquah et al., 2014, p. 30).

In Senegal, the coastline is home to around 70 per cent of the population, who are now witnessing its erosion. Coastal erosion, together with socioeconomic status, dependence on natural resources and demographic characteristics, is affecting internal and international mobility patterns, especially among fishermen from the city of Saint Louis. As a response to the depletion of fish stocks, most fishermen from the Saint Louis district of Guet Ndar seasonally cross borders (to Mauritania, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, the Gambia, Sierra Leone or Liberia) to carry on with their fishing activities (Zickgraf, 2018a, p. 12). Only the most successful Guet Ndarian fishermen who are already part of the richest households are able to relocate with their families within Senegal (Zickgraf, 2018a, p. 19). Often, women, the elderly and the retired, and those whose occupations are land-based are left behind, as they are less able to use migration

⁵ For an in-depth analysis of planned relocation in West Africa, please refer to the forthcoming publications: Bower, E. and S. Weerasinghe, *Leaving Place, Restoring Home: Enhancing the Evidence Base on Planned Relocation Cases in the Context of Hazards, Disasters and Climate Change* (PDD, Geneva); Mokhnacheva, D., *Leaving Place, Restoring Home II: A Review of French and Spanish Literature on Planned Relocation in the Context of Hazards, Disasters, and Climate Change* (IOM, Geneva).

as an adaptation strategy (Zickgraf, 2018a, p. 19). The Senegalese Government, together with the World Bank, is working towards the relocation of nearly 10,000 people from high-risk areas in the coastal city of Saint Louis (IDMC, 2019b, p. 21). Some families have been resettled temporarily in camps in areas that are themselves vulnerable to flooding, putting these people at risk of repeated displacement (IDMC, 2019b, p. 21).

In the coastal area of Cotonou in Benin, fishermen prefer to stay near the coast so they can easily carry out their economic activities. However, precarious populations fearing displacement by the sea want to move. Zickgraf et al. (2016, p. 16) distinguish between two groups of precarious populations: (a) those who have lost their homes to the sea and have fallen into poverty, and (b) those who have moved into the risk zone because it was the only area in the city where they could afford rent. Due to insufficient financial capital and social network, as well as the lack of alternatives, these “trapped” populations pursue the adaptation strategy of continually moving within the risk zone (Zickgraf et al., 2016, p. 16).

1.6. Data challenges and limitations

Important data gaps and methodological challenges hinder an in-depth understanding of the extent of environmental migration, disaster displacement and planned relocation in West Africa (IOM, 2020c). First, it is challenging to isolate the environment from other drivers of human mobility, making mobility data collection difficult. This means that the overall number of people moving in West Africa in the context of slow-onset environmental and climate events and processes is not known. This also means that records of disaster- and conflict-related movements sometimes overlap. Second, people’s destinations and movements trajectories are not always given alongside the estimates provided. For example, despite the recognition of disaster-induced cross-border displacement in the region, actual data and examples of people crossing borders are hard to come by. This is partly because of the free movement regime in place and the lack of systematic monitoring (Ionesco et al., 2017, pp. 12–15). Third, the duration of disaster displacement needs to be better understood, as protracted displacement increases the vulnerability of affected people – and permanent migration or relocation implies different risks and solutions. The scarcity of time-series data also makes it challenging to fully understand the scale and nature of protracted displacement in disaster contexts (IDMC, 2019b, p. 19). Fourth, comprehensive data sets do not yet exist at the global level, but several initiatives have started to collect information across several countries (IOM, 2020c). Finally, the very lack of data and underreporting on population movements remain an issue, affecting the availability and quality of trends.

1.7. Summary

The West Africa subregion has always been a centre of mobility, with an international migrant stock of 7.4 million in 2019. Most of the movements are internal (i.e. within countries) and intraregional, and less likely to be recorded than in other regions or continents, mainly due to the visa-free regime established by the ECOWAS Protocol on the Free Movement of People and Goods. Mobility is traced mainly between neighbouring States, from rural to urban centres, and from landlocked countries to coastal ones. These traditional internal and international migration dynamics are shaped by several drivers, including disasters, climate change and environmental degradation. Rainfall variability, increasing temperatures, and much more frequent and severe events and processes such as floods, droughts, but also sea-level rise, coastal erosion land degradation, and water scarcity are some of the trends affecting the 16 countries. West Africa is also among the world’s most vulnerable regions in relation to the impacts of climate change on its agriculture.

Environmental migration, disaster displacement and planned relocation are a reality in West Africa. Circular migration is common in West Africa, including particularly in the context of agricultural activities and depending on the availability of water and occurrence of drought. Environmental drivers also affect pastoralism in West Africa and shape tensions over natural resources, as conflict interlinks with the consequences of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation. Free movement and mixed-migration flows, although challenging to track, are also prevalent in the region, including in contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation. Displacement in the context of sudden-onset disasters also happens in West Africa, with an estimated 370,000 new IDPs in 2019. While this number varies from year to year, floods, heavy rains and tidal surges remain the main causes, with impacts in Nigeria causing the highest yearly fluctuations. Planned relocation is already being conducted by governments in West Africa, mainly to prepare for or in response to coastal erosion. Fishing communities along the coast of West Africa are highly impacted by disasters, with several of them being beneficiaries of the planned relocations projects.

While we have some facts and numbers pertaining to human mobility in West Africa in contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation, there are still many unknowns. Data on the overall number of people moving in the context of slow-onset events and processes, the destinations of displaced populations, and the duration of disaster displacement, among others, are still lacking. Methodological issues and lack of data are the main limiting factors to building a more complete picture. It is essential to understand these movements beyond the context of environmental factors, to also include social, political, economic and demographic factors, especially as conflict situations are prevalent in the subregion. It would be fundamental to take these factors into account in the making and implementation of policies and plans.

2. Policy horizons for West Africa

A multitude of policy frameworks and strategies exist at the global, regional, subregional and national levels to address human mobility in contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation. These policy frameworks and strategies mainly look at three types of solutions: (a) solutions for people to stay, (b) solutions for people to move, and (c) solutions for people on the move, as put by IOM (2007), or (a) solutions to avert displacement, (b) solutions to minimize displacement, and (c) solutions to address displacement, as put by the Task Force on Displacement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 2018). IOM (2018a, p. 6; 2018b, p. 6) proposes the following definitions for these solutions:

- (a) Solutions for people to stay or to avert displacement are understood “as measures to reduce or avoid the risk of forced and unmanaged migration as much as possible. Measures may include: disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and mitigation, resilience-building and community stabilization.”
- (b) Solutions for people to move or to minimize displacement are understood “as measures to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration as part of adaption strategies to climate change and thus, curb the number of people forced to move by providing alternative livelihoods. Measures may include: ensuring migration pathways via free movement protocols, labour schemes or transhumance agreements, or, as a last resort, planning relocations of people living in high-risk areas.”
- (c) Solutions for people on the move or to address displacement are understood “as measures to prepare for and respond to displacement when it happens, including through ensuring assistance and protection for those on the move due to climate change, and seeking lasting solutions. Measures may include: contingency planning, humanitarian relief aid, granting, expediting or waiving visas, non-return policies or reintegration strategies.”

Protection and a human rights-based approach are central to these solutions. Protection needs vary depending on a range of factors, including whether movement is internal or international, forced or voluntary, or temporary or permanent. In the more specific case of cross-border mobility in West Africa, Gemenne et al. (2017, p. 237) identified seven key protection areas in West Africa: (a) prevention and reduction, (b) entry, (c) stay, (d) housing, (e) land and property restitutions, (f) protection during the displacement, (g) access to humanitarian assistance and (h) durable solutions. States have the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of individuals. These include individual rights to life, adequate access to food, water, health and housing, and nationality; the collective right to self-determination; and the rights to non-discrimination, participation and information-sharing for affected persons, to ensure accountability and redress for abuse and violations (OHCHR and PDD, 2018, p. 48; IOM, 2014, p. 30). It is essential that any legal provision or policy instrument that applies to these human mobility situations be interpreted using a human rights-based approach.

This chapter provides an overview of policy frameworks and strategies at the global, regional and subregional levels, as well as the specific actors and mechanisms involved in dealing with human mobility in contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation. Some key national policies are also reviewed, mostly as examples of subregional policy extension. A review and assessment of the implementation of these policies is outside of the scope of this desk review, as are bilateral agreements and transnational cooperation. The section takes the key West African mobility trends presented in the previous section and zooms in on the relevant policy areas of migration management, climate change and disaster management, while also touching on pastoralism, agriculture and humanitarian action as key areas for West Africa.



A melting pot of different types of migrants, the town of Diffa sits within the broader Diffa Region of Niger, bordering Nigeria. These include internally displaced people from N'gourtau, Niger fleeing Boko Haram. © Amanda NERO/IOM 2016

2.1. Global

There are several international policy frameworks addressing migration management, climate change action and disaster management that are relevant for the West Africa subregion, including the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the Global Compact on Refugees, the Paris Agreement, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. Overarching all these are the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which establish the principle of leaving no one behind. The links between mobility on the one hand, and disasters, adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation on the other, are not directly addressed by the SDGs. Several SDGs are nevertheless relevant to the topic: SDG 8 (on decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (on reduced inequalities) and, more specifically, SDG 10.7 (on facilitating orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies), SDG 13 (on climate action), and SDG 17 (on partnerships for the SDGs) – even as SDG 13 does not mention migration or displacement, nor are SDGs 8, 10 and 17 linked to climate change (IOM, 2017, pp. 23–38).

In the area of migration management policy, the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants paved the way for the development and adoption in 2018 of the **Global Compact for Migration** and the **Global Compact on Refugees**. These two global frameworks overarch the management of international population movements. The Global Compact for Migration is the first-ever negotiated international framework on migration wherein, particularly in its Objectives 2 and 5, States recognize disasters, climate change and environmental degradation as drivers of migration and agree on a comprehensive understanding of the challenges linked to movements in these contexts. Through the Global Compact for Migration, States also call for policy coherence to address the drivers of migration, including with the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework and the UNCCD (Ionesco and Chazalnoël, 2018). Complementing the Global Compact for Migration is the Global Compact on Refugees, a framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing in finding solutions for refugee situations. It recognizes that climate, environmental degradation and disasters interact with the root causes of refugee movements and proposes actions to address these links, including via joint UNHCR–IOM work.

Moreover, and especially relevant to the West Africa subregion, both Global Compacts emphasize the need to work at the subregional level to address and manage the multicausality of human mobility at all stages of the migration cycle (UNGA, 2018a, p. 10), especially considering the significant subregional dimension of refugee movements (UNGA, 2018b, p. 11). This commitment reiterates the importance of subregional cooperation to achieve safe, orderly and regular population movements, including in contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation (UNGA, 2018a, p. 9). To help implement, follow-up on and review progress on the Global Compact for Migration, a subregional **United Nations Network on Migration for West and Central Africa**, co-chaired by the IOM Regional Director and the Regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group Chair, was established to capitalize on States' efforts throughout (United Nations Network on Migration, 2019, p. 1). At the country level, United Nations Networks on Migration have also been established in Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria and Senegal. More United Nations Networks on Migration in other countries in the subregion are currently under development. In addition, the Governments of Senegal and of Guinea-Bissau are so-called “champion countries” for the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration. The document, **“Implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration: Guidance for governments and all relevant stakeholders”**, suggests a six-step process to support States in implementing the Global Compact, including through the development of national implementation plans (NIPs) (United Nations Network on Migration, 2020). IOM is preparing another document, based on the guidance document, explaining the linkages between the Global Compact for Migration and the Migration, Environment and Climate Change Agenda to specifically guide States and practitioners on integrating these considerations in their NIPs (IOM, n.d.c). In parallel, the Global Compact on Refugees is being implemented by States with the support of UNHCR via various mechanisms, including the Asylum Capacity Support Group, which is expected to help States adapt their asylum systems to major changes in the world, including climate change (UNHCR, 2020, p. 39). Furthermore, Opportunities/Issue-Based Coalition (O/IBC) 7 on Forced Displacement and Migration in Africa, co-led by UNHCR and IOM, has been established. O/IBC 7 aims to offer coordinated United Nations systemwide support to Member States on the implementation of mobility-related aspects of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, and strengthen coordination across the two Global Compacts' networks and mechanisms.

In the area of climate change action policy, the first milestone was set by the 2010 Cancun Climate Change Adaptation Framework, wherein UNFCCC Parties recognize migration, displacement and planned relocation in the context of climate change. In 2015, States adopted the **Paris Agreement** to strengthen action on climate change adaptation by undertaking “measures to enhance understanding, coordination and cooperation” with regard to human mobility in the context of the adverse effects of climate change (UNFCCC, 2010, p. 5). The Twenty-first Conference of the Parties (COP21), during which the Paris Agreement was adopted, also mandated the creation of a **UNFCCC Task Force on**

Displacement to develop recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change. The task force delivered on its mandate at the Twenty-fourth Conference of the Parties (COP24) in Katowice, Poland, where the Parties welcomed its recommendations and renewed its mandate. The recommendations included a call “to support and enhance regional, subregional and transboundary cooperation” (UNFCCC, 2018, p. 5).

As regards slow-onset events, the **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification** is the first intergovernmental environmental agreement to explicitly link migration with environmental change (IOM and UNCCD, 2019, p. 3). Its preamble acknowledges the interrelationships between desertification, drought, sustainable development and important social problems, including those arising from migration and displacement of persons (UNCCD, 1994, p. 2). Furthermore, the UNCCD encourages the “establishment and/or strengthening, as appropriate, of early-warning systems, including local and national facilities and joint systems, at the subregional and regional levels, and mechanisms for assisting environmentally displaced persons” in its Article 10.3(a) (UNCCD, 1994, p. 10). In addition, the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework sets the substantial reduction of migration forced by desertification and land degradation as an expected impact under its Strategic Objective 2: “to improve the living conditions of affected populations” (UNCCD, 2017a, p. 4). In 2019, IOM and UNCCD worked together to further clarify the role of the UNCCD in relation to its Strategic Objective 2 and asked UNCCD Parties to: (a) prioritize community-focused sustainable land management and restoration efforts, (b) harness migration policy and practice, and (c) maximize synergies across policy areas (IOM and UNCCD, 2019, pp. 33–34).

In the area of disaster management policy, States recognized displacement as one of the impacts of disasters in the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030**. Key targets relevant to disaster displacement include reducing the number of people affected by disasters (Target B) and substantially increasing the number of national and local disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies adopted and implemented by 2020 (Target E). To support States in their implementation of the Sendai Framework, the **Words into Action Guidelines on Disaster Displacement** was issued in 2019 to provide guidance for governments on how to include disaster displacement-related provisions in their DRR strategies (UNDRR, 2019). Focusing on a broader scope, the **IOM Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation Integrated Human Mobility Assessment Tool** provides assessment-based guidance, in line with the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI) process (IOM, 2020d).

Finally, two United Nations initiatives are also relevant. First, the **Agenda for Humanity** specifically includes addressing migration and displacement among the strategic and normative transformations it aims for. To address displacement, the Agenda sets a target to reduce new and protracted internal displacement by at least 50 per cent by 2030, inviting States and the international community to prepare for cross-border displacement due to disasters and climate change. Second, the United Nations Security Council adopted the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) framework in 2013 to address the root causes of the Sahel crisis (United Nations, 2013). While the strategy does not address any aspect of human mobility, the **United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel (UNSP)**, which results from it, does. The UNSP is an instrument for fostering coherence and coordination for greater efficiency and results delivery under UNISS (United Nations, 2017). It focuses United Nations interventions in the Sahel along six priorities:

- (a) Promoting cross-border and regional cooperation for stability and development;
- (b) Building resilience to climate change, improving management of natural resources, and decreasing malnutrition and food insecurity;
- (c) Preventing and resolving conflicts and building peace; preventing violent extremism and crime; and promoting access to justice and human rights (crisis prevention);
- (d) Empowering women and youth;

- (e) Promoting inclusive and equitable growth and increasing quality access to basic services (economic revitalization);
- (f) Promoting access to renewable energy.

(UNISS, 2021)

Under the first priority relating to cross-border and regional cooperation for stability and development, two sub-objectives present an opportunity to address disaster displacement, environmental migration and planned relocation under UNISS: (a) “support governments and regional entities with information systems and capacities for risk-informed policy decision-making, to mitigate and address the impacts of disasters and hazards, and [with] recovery planning” and (b) “facilitate the implementation of a safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility programme, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies in the 10 UNISS countries” (United Nations, 2018, p. 13–14). UNSP also recognizes the link between climate change and migration, stating that “climate change is driving food insecurity, malnutrition, internal migration and conflicts in the Sahel” (United Nations, 2018, p. 9). There is, however, little public information available on the current status of the UNSP.



People in Hodh El Chargui Region of Mauritania faced a major drought in 2017. © Sibylle DESJARDINS/IOM 2016

2.2. Regional: The African Union

The African Union is the main body that fosters and leads regional cooperation and the integration of African States, including in the areas of migration management, climate change action and disaster management. Officially launched in 2002 as the successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which existed from 1963 to 1999, the African Union currently consists of 55 member States – that is, all countries on the African continent. It has eight regional economic communities (RECs) representing the subregional groupings of the continent, among which are the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN–SAD).

2.2.1. The African Union and human mobility policy

The **African Union Revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) and Plan of Action (2018–2027)** is the main migration management policy of the continent. It was adopted in 2018, following African Union member States' and RECs' recommendations to update the previous framework dating from 2006. The 2018 Revised MPFA reflects the current migration dynamics in Africa and provides comprehensive policy guidelines and principles to assist member States and RECs in formulating and implementing their own national and regional migration policies, including via its accompanying Plan of Action (African Union, 2018a, p. 28). What is more, it states that “environmental degradation and poverty are significant root causes of mass migration and forced displacement in Africa” (African Union, 2018a, p. 1) and, in its dedicated Key Pillar 9.7 on the migration–environment nexus (African Union, 2018a, pp. 76–77), recommends specific strategies to States, including those for addressing migration in the context of the environment, protecting the environment and taking climate change action. The recommended strategies of the Revised MPFA and Plan of Action (2018–2027) are:

- (i) Incorporate environmental considerations in the formulation of national and regional migration management policies to better address environment-related causes of migratory movements, as well as the impact migratory movements have on the environment – increase collaboration with relevant international agencies to this end, including by strengthening research and data gathering and exchange on the relationship between migration and the environment.
- (ii) Counter environmental degradation caused by the large, protracted presence of displaced persons, for example, by means of implementing relevant and targeted environmental protection programmes, including periodic review[s] of ecosystem impacts and remedial measures to mitigate such impacts – in the case of protracted refugee situations, calling upon UNHCR and countries of first asylum to identify priority areas for resettlement based on the degree of potential environmental degradation and the need to protect ecosystems in a given area.
- (iii) Implement the Common African Position on Climate Change.

(African Union, 2018a, p. 77).

In addition, the Revised MPFA and Plan of Action (2018–2027) also highlights the intersection between migration and the environment as a cross-cutting issue. Forced displacement is a key pillar of the Revised MPFA (African Union, 2018a, p. 10), which recommends addressing the effects of conflict and large population movements, especially protracted ones, on the environment (African Union, 2018a, pp. 61 and 63). As one of its recommended strategies to address the migration, poverty and conflict nexus, the Revised MPFA suggests that African States and RECs “draw up reliable policies for the protection of the environment in order to avoid natural disasters, the encroachment of the desert and soil degradation, [all of] which are major sources of displacement of people from their natural environment” (African Union, 2018a, p. 74). Furthermore, in the overarching migration governance recommendations in the Revised MPFA, States put emphasis on the need to develop accurate data on migration trends in relation to environmental degradation and climate change (African Union, 2018a, p. 30). The Policy Framework also promotes regional consultative processes (RCPs) on migration such as MIDWA (see [section 2.3.1](#) for more details on MIDWA), as a vehicle to share “best practices on migration governance, and current migration trends and realities (to ensure that migration frameworks and processes are in tune with

current realities)” (African Union, 2018a, p. 31). Finally, it encourages a whole-of-government approach to migration management via national apparatuses to “engage all ministries [working on] migration issues in migration policy development and implementation through national coordinating mechanisms on migration” (African Union, 2018a, p. 31).

In line with the Revised MPFA, and to implement the Global Compact for Migration at the regional level, African Union member States and RECs developed a **Three-Year Implementation Plan of Action for the Global Compact for Migration in Africa (2020–2022)** in 2019, pending approval as of the end of 2020. Priority 7 of the Three-Year Plan of Action aligns with Objective 2 of the Global Compact for Migration, as it calls for “[m]inimizing the adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters and environmental degradation that compel people to leave their country of origin” (African Union, 2019b, p. 34). Its priority activities focus on more and better evidence, policy coherence and development, and migrants’ protection and assistance (African Union, 2019b, pp. 34–37). While it is beyond the scope of this paper to assess the implementation of the Revised MPFA and the Three-Year Plan of Action, the Global Compact for Migration Regional Reviews foreseen for 2020–2021 could provide first insights regarding the achievement of the Global Compact’s objectives in the region.

The **OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa** (“OAU Refugee Convention”), was adopted in 1969 and entered into force in 1974. Article 1.2 of this binding Convention provides an expanded definition of “refugee” that allows for an interpretation covering cross-border displacement in contexts of disasters and adverse effects of climate change, if the event is severe enough to constitute “serious disruption of public order” (OAU, 1969, p. 3). This interpretation remains debated (Wood, 2019b, pp. 19–20), even as several African States have already used it (UNHCR, 2018, pp. 28–29; Wood, 2015, pp. 23–29). All 16 West African States have ratified the Convention (African Union, 2019f): 11 of them (Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, the Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo) have domesticated the expanded refugee definition into national refugee-related law, and 4 (Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Mauritania and Senegal) allow for the direct application of treaty law at the domestic level (Wood, 2018, pp. 44–45). Even as Benin and Burkina Faso have adopted the expanded refugee definition, however, Wood (2018, p. 49) has been unable to find an accurate application of the specific interpretation mentioned above.

Adopted in 2009, the **African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (“Kampala Convention”)**, entered into force in 2012. It is the first regional agreement of any region that establishes a legally binding obligation on States to prevent displacement and protect people displaced in contexts of disasters and the adverse effects of climate change. Article 5, paragraph 4 of the Kampala Convention states that “States Parties shall take measures to protect and assist persons who have been internally displaced due to natural or human made disasters, including climate change” (African Union, 2009, p. 8). In 2017, the Harare Plan of Action was adopted to support the implementation of the Convention, setting priorities and activities for the African Union, States Parties, RECs and partners (African Union, 2017b). Following the challenges that member States faced in the domestication and implementation of the Convention (ICRC, 2019, pp. 60–61), the African Union created a model law on internal displacement in 2018 to guide national authorities in drafting domestic legislation. This model law includes a chapter on internal displacement caused by disasters, providing protection during the entire displacement cycle (African Union, 2018c, pp. 4–7). As of October 2019, most West African States had ratified the Convention, with only Ghana, Guinea and Senegal signing but not ratifying, and Cabo Verde not signing it (African Union, 2019a). While ratification of the Convention marks progress, there is a general lack of its domestication and, therefore, implementation in Africa. Beyani (2020, p. 14) identified two main difficulties: “[o]ne lies in the difficulty faced by African States in applying the Kampala Convention and its modern aspects that combine State responsibility, the responsibility of international organizations, including the African Union, and those of non-State actors, particularly armed groups, in constitutionalized legal systems. Another relates to the complexity of both the process and the technical expertise required to prepare appropriate substantive legislation

to incorporate or domesticate the Kampala Convention". Out of all African Union member States, the Niger is the only State to have domesticated the Kampala Convention, and although the related law has been promulgated, it lacks an implementing decree (ICRC, 2019, p. 61). Mali adopted terms of reference for the elaboration of a national legislative framework on internal displacement in 2018 (Scott, 2019, p. 470).

Free movement of persons constitutes a strong structural aspiration within the African Union, emphasized with the adoption in 2015 of Agenda 2063, Africa's 50-year strategic framework (African Union, 2015b, p. 5), and is a central goal of the African Economic Community (AEC) (Wood, 2019a, p. 20). In 2018, the **AEC Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment** was adopted (African Union, 2018b). Although there is no specific reference to environmental drivers, free movement protocols generally have the potential to allow for regular migration in contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation, while also reducing the protection gap in situations of cross-border disaster displacement (Wood, 2019a, p. 41). Protection is addressed in the Protocol (Wood, 2019a, p. 34), with Article 4(4) stating that citizens "shall enjoy the protection of the law of the host Member State, in accordance with the relevant national policies and laws of the host Member State." The Protocol has not yet entered into force, as it needs 15 States to ratify it. Most West African States had signed the Protocol as of July 2019, the exceptions being Benin, Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Nigeria. Only Mali and the Niger have ratified it (African Union, 2019b). West Africa has a more advanced free movement agreement at the subregional level through ECOWAS, as [section 2.3](#) shows.

Among other relevant African Union policy frameworks addressing human mobility is the 2010 **Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa**. Pastoralism is a long-standing practice in Africa, including West Africa and the Sahel, with people moving internally and internationally with their livestock. The Policy Framework acknowledges the impact of climate change and its negative consequences on pastoralists' grazing areas and their livelihoods. It is the first of its kind to aim to secure and improve the livelihoods and rights of pastoralists in Africa at the regional level (African Union, 2010, p. i). It calls for the recognition of "the considerable adaptability of pastoralism if pastoralists are enabled to practice mobile livestock production" (African Union, 2010, p. 21).

2.2.2. The African Union and climate change policy

Several pathways have been designed by the African Union to address the need for a common response to climate change. First, the African Union established the **Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)** in 2003 as a strategy to achieve economic growth through agricultural development on the continent. The **New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Planning and Coordinating Agency**, a technical body of the African Union Commission, is mandated to coordinate the implementation of the CAADP. In the context of preparedness and response capacity to emergencies, the CAADP acknowledges displacement within or outside borders in the context of conflicts and the impact of flooding and drought on productive lands as the main emergencies to keep in mind (African Union, 2003, p. 48). For regions affected by flooding, the programme highlights the importance of long-term prevention and immediate assistance in relocation (and reactivation) of farming in affected areas (African Union, 2003, p. 50).

Second, in 2011, the **African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN)** prepared a **Guidebook on Addressing Climate Change Challenges in Africa: A Practical Guide towards Sustainable Development** (AMCEN, 2011), rich in references on environmental migration and disaster displacement, including in the context of security challenges.

Third, and still as part of the continental response, the **African Union Climate Change and Desertification Unit** was established within the African Union Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture in 2009 (African Union, 2014, p. 13). In the same year, the African Union Commission (AUC) was tasked to facilitate the development of an “African Strategy” for climate change. In 2014, the AUC elaborated a comprehensive draft for an African strategy on climate change, which was then integrated into the CAADP. The **Draft African Union Strategy on Climate Change** makes several references to human mobility, particularly on migration and displacement as impacted by climate change (African Union, 2014, pp. 10, 44, 46 and 54) and forced migration in the context of resource-based conflict (African Union, 2014, p. 55). While these links show great awareness at the African Union level of the effects of climate change on population movements, these frameworks lack concrete proposals for action.

2.2.3. The African Union and disaster management policy

In the area of DRR policy, the **Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (ARSDRR)** was adopted by African Union member States in 2004 and is the key DRR framework in Africa (African Union et al., 2004, p. 2). In the strategy, States address human mobility only as it relates to conflict and frame it as a contributing factor to disaster risk (Yonetani, 2019, p. 39), agreeing to “address disasters caused by natural hazards induced by mass population movement resulting from conflicts” (African Union et al., 2004, p. 4). Similarly, in the 2017 African Union Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 in Africa, aligned with ARSDRR, States frame human mobility only as migration linked to conflict being a driver of disaster risk (African Union, 2017a, p. 7). Nevertheless, the 2017 Programme of Action calls for national and local DRR agencies to support evacuations, thus acknowledging the displacement consequences of disasters in its proposed actions (African Union, 2017a, p. 26).

In addition, African States have also recognized and discussed the mobility implications of disasters at regional and global DRR platforms. The Tunis Declaration on Accelerating the Implementation of the Sendai Framework and the ARSDRR, adopted at the Africa–Arab Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction in October 2018, call for the recognition of “the ever-increasing risk of disasters and their devastating effects, including forced displacement” (African Union and League of Arab States, 2018, p. 2). The importance of human mobility is further emphasized in the Africa Common Position to the 2019 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, in which States refer to displacement mainly as a consequence of disasters and an exacerbating factor of differentiated impacts. Furthermore, the Common Position presents 10 priority actions to accelerate the implementation of the 2017 Programme of Action. Priority Action 2, specifically, aligns with Target E of the Sendai Framework and puts emphasis on the need to increase understanding of the interlinkages between climate change, disasters, displacement, conflict and development, as well as finding durable solutions to forced displacement and building resilience in hazard-prone countries, including Small Island Developing States (African Union, 2019d, p. 3).

The development and implementation of DRR frameworks are guided by the African Union Commission (Orago, 2019, p. 326), whose Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture has a DRR unit working to enhance regional coordination (African Development Bank et al., 2018, p. 4). RECs are responsible for providing strategic guidance to their member States and have been designated by the African Union as the main implementation mechanism of the Sendai Framework.

At the humanitarian level, the Humanitarian Affairs, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (HARDP) Division of the Department of Political Affairs of the African Union has a mandate to provide durable solutions to humanitarian crises in the context of humanitarian response and relief, including disasters. The African Union 2015 Humanitarian Policy Framework, spearheaded by HARDP, proposes a comprehensive strategy to address humanitarian situations, including by considering the mobility effects of crises and calling for protection and assistance in mixed-migration settings, and assistance to refugees, asylum seekers, returnees, stateless persons and internally displaced persons (African Union, 2015a, p. 3).

2.3. Subregional: The Economic Community of West African States and the Community of Sahel–Saharan States

Two RECs of the African Union are of geographic relevance in West Africa region: the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN–SAD).

2.3.1. The Economic Community of West African States

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established in 1975 through the Treaty of Lagos. It is a 15-member regional group with a mandate of promoting economic cooperation and regional integration. ECOWAS has three arms of governance, the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary, and is headquartered in Abuja, Nigeria. Its Member States are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, the Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Togo. Mauritania withdrew its membership in 2000; Morocco applied to join ECOWAS in 2017. The ECOWAS Vision is “the creation of a borderless region where the population has access to its abundant resources and is able to exploit the same through the creation of opportunities under a sustainable environment” (ECOWAS, 2010c, p. 2).

ECOWAS and human mobility-related policy

In 2000, ECOWAS, together with IOM and supported by the Government of Switzerland, established an RCP on migration (IOM, 2020b) for West Africa, the **Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA)**. MIDWA aims to “accelerat[e] the regional integration process and address problematic migration issues in a regional forum” (IOM, n.d.b, p. 1). Since 2017, the ECOWAS Commission has served as the MIDWA Secretariat, overseeing the coordination of the MIDWA thematic working groups and the programmatic interests of sectors pertinent to migration and the creation of synergies between these sectors. In a survey on migration policies in West Africa led by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and IOM between 2012 and 2014, the Niger indicated the effects of climate change on migration as a priority area for the MIDWA agenda (ICMPD and IOM, 2015, p. 65). Other West African States jointly expressed interest in engaging in a regional dialogue on migration, climate change and environmental issues in 2015. The Ministry of Environment of Benin, the Office of the Secretary of State of Guinea-Bissau, and the Ministry of Planning, Development and Land Use of Togo requested the support of Migration EU eXpertise (MIEUX)⁶ on this topic (MIEUX, 2019, p. 24). With the migration–environment nexus as a part of its current thematic focus of discussion, MIDWA has a dedicated thematic working group on “climate change, land degradation, desertification, environment and migration” chaired by Burkina Faso (IOM, n.d.a). The working group has not been active in light of other MIDWA priorities, but there are current discussions between West African States, ECOWAS and IOM in the region to strengthen this engagement. This represents an opportunity, at the regional level, to form a shared understanding of the main issues around migration and displacement in contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental migration, and identify solutions. MIDWA has also contributed to several regional initiatives, including the creation of the Sustainability, Stability and Security (3S) Initiative, which addresses migration and instability caused by land degradation, and the development of the ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration, both described in this section.

⁶ MIEUX, a joint initiative funded by the European Union and implemented by ICMPD, “supports partner countries and regional organizations to better manage migration and mobility through the provision of rapid, tailor-made assistance upon request”. The initiative has crafted an action to “contribute to the development of dialogue and consultation to enhance action and cooperation both at the national level and among West African countries on migration, climate change, and environmental issues”, which it carried out between 2014 and 2018. (MIEUX, 2016) For more information, visit www.mieux-initiative.eu/en.

The **ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration** was adopted in 2008 (ECOWAS, 2008) as the overarching framework on migration, with its main objective that of establishing a link between migration and development (ECOWAS, 2008, p. 3). Its six principles include: (a) free movement of persons as a priority; (b) legal migration towards other regions of the world; (c) moral imperatives of combating human trafficking and humanitarian assistance; (d) harmonizing policies; (e) protection of the rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees; and (f) recognizing the gender dimension of migration policies (ECOWAS, 2008, pp. 4–6). No specific mention is made of disasters, the adverse effects of climate change or environmental degradation; however, there is a strong protection component that includes humanitarian assistance and rights protection, which could be used to address major gaps in the protection of persons moving in contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation. The Common Approach is currently being revised, and an **ECOWAS Regional Migration Policy** is being envisioned and intended to have a dedicated focus on migration and climate change (ECOWAS, 2018). The Regional Migration Policy would also build on the recent Global Compact for Migration and seek to address the main limitations of the Common Approach, including its “scant strategic vision, lack of comprehensiveness in its action plans, lack of coordination and cooperation mechanisms for its implementation, and the absence of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms” (ECOWAS, 2018). At the national level, good practices have been identified in **Ghana’s (2016) and Nigeria’s (2015) national migration policies**, in that they have dedicated sections on the migration–environment nexus (IOM, 2018b, p. 8) focusing on pastoralism, forced movement and diasporas, as well as action points on data, capacity-building, communication and migration policy coherence among the areas of climate change, environment, disaster risk reduction, urban development and overall development policy.

ECOWAS has a long tradition of advocating for the free movement of people, and its **Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment** (“Free Movement Protocol”) has been highlighted by the African Union as one of its important achievements (African Union, 2019c, p. 7). The Free Movement Protocol and its four supplementary protocols establish the right of ECOWAS citizens to travel with valid documents and stay in any country of the community for a 90-day period (ECOWAS, 1979, 1986, 1989 and 1990). In addition, a common ECOWAS passport was introduced in 2000 (ICMPD and IOM, 2015, p. 38). However, the right of entry has limits, as Member States have the right to refuse admission into their territory anyone that meets certain criteria under national inadmissibility laws (as provided for in Article 4 of the ECOWAS Protocol). This, in return, can limit the effectiveness of the protocols in facilitating mobility (ICMPD and IOM, 2015, p. 38), including in contexts of disaster, climate change and environmental degradation, such as when people have to cross borders to flee a disaster, seek livelihood opportunities or relocate as a last resort (Wood, 2019a, p. 28).

In its 2015 report, the ECOWAS Commission considered the Free Movement Protocol to be a significant success due to the introduction of a legal basis for the rights of residence and establishment. In several cases, these rights have already been enforced through national laws (ECOWAS, 2015b, p. 122). Nevertheless, the Commission also recognizes that significant obstacles to the free movement of persons remain, specifically: “i. the selective implementation of the Protocol on free movement and related relevant texts; ii. the proliferation of unauthorized roadblocks; iii. harassment at border crossings; and iv. Community citizens and security agents not being properly informed of the rights set out in the Protocol on free movement” (ECOWAS, 2015b, p. 122). To find solutions to these obstacles, the ECOWAS Commission is establishing national steering committees as part of the Regional Monitoring Mechanism for the Free Movement of Inter-State Passenger Vehicles, Persons and Goods in selected pilot countries (Ghana, Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Côte d’Ivoire, the Niger, Nigeria and Togo) (Wood, 2019a, p. 24). The European Union’s externalization of migration policies and border control in West African countries, as in the case of the Niger and Mali, also undermines the implementation of free movement within ECOWAS. Restrictive migration practices have been witnessed in the Niger, including the deportation of ECOWAS citizens, contravening the Free Movement Protocol (Bisong, 2020).

The Protocol does not specify or address the assistance and protection needs of displaced persons (PDD, 2019b, p. 8), and the adoption of an additional protocol for the application of free movement in the contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation has not yet been considered at the regional level (p. 20). While national law and policy frameworks are fundamental to enhancing the role of free movement agreements in addressing human mobility in the contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation (PDD, 2019b, p. 8), the lack of further evidence makes it difficult to assess the extent of the use of the Protocol and how it influences domestic policymaking.

The **ECOWAS Directorate for Free Movement and Tourism** follows the implementation of all these ECOWAS frameworks for migration management. To support the effective implementation of the Free Movement Protocol and the Common Approach on Migration, the ECOWAS Commission, together with an IOM-led consortium, established the European Union-funded Free Movement and Migration (FMM) West Africa Project. FMM supports ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania in migration data management, border management, labour migration, and combating trafficking in persons and migrant-smuggling at the policy and research levels, including through MIDWA (FMM West Africa, 2017). Together with the **ECOWAS Directorate for Free Movement and Tourism**, the ECOWAS Directorate of Humanitarian and Social Affairs, and the ECOWAS Directorate of Research and Statistics are the main partners of FMM.

On the topic of pastoralism, ECOWAS is the only African REC to pass legislation to specifically facilitate regional livestock and human mobility (IOM, 2019b, p. 21). It adopted the ECOWAS Transhumance Protocol in 1998 and the Regulation relating to its implementation in 2003. In its preamble, the Protocol acknowledges both the climatic constraints that livestock breeding faces and how it can also constitute a source of environmental problems (ECOWAS, 1998, p. 3). The Protocol aims to promote peaceful management of pastoralism, as well as the prevention and management of conflict linked to it. In addition, the ECOWAS International Transhumance Certificate (ITC), which allows for cross-border movement of herders and their livestock, was created (IOM et al., 2019, p. 15). However, none of the ECOWAS member States has developed operational guidelines for the implementation of the Protocol, leaving its institutional set-up unclear (IOM et al., 2019, p. 22).

ECOWAS and climate change and environmental policy

In 2010, ECOWAS adopted its **Regional Action Program to Reduce Vulnerability to Climate Change in West Africa**. Its objective is to “develop and strengthen the resilience and adaptability of the West Africa subregion to climate change and extreme weather events” (ECOWAS, 2010a), with three priorities: (a) strengthen the scientific and technical capacity of the subregion to reduce vulnerability to climate change; (b) promote the integration of climate change aspects into development policies, strategies, programmes and projects at the subregional and national levels; and (c) support, develop and implement subregional and national programmes and projects on climate change adaptation. ECOWAS also addresses climate change through several policies on water management, energy and agriculture.



Rice cultivation in Côte d'Ivoire. © Alioune NDIAYE/IOM 2000

Human mobility in the context of the adverse effects of climate change has been recognized in the national adaptation plans (NAPs) for climate change⁷ of two countries (Gemenne et al., 2017, p. 327; IOM, 2018b). The **Togo National Climate Change Adaptation Plan** acknowledges displacement in the context of coastal erosion (Government of Togo, 2018, p. 10). The country has also integrated human mobility considerations in its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) and its National Communications to the UNFCCC (IOM, 2018b, p. 13). The **Burkina Faso National Climate Change Adaptation Plan** recognizes forced migration in its vulnerability assessment, as it “may disrupt physical planning and local governance” (Government of Burkina Faso, 2015, p. 29); establishes relocation of populations from low-lying or flood zones to suitable areas as an adaptation measure (pp. 15, 64 and 66); and sets an objective “to protect persons and goods from extreme climate events and natural disasters” (p. 10). What is more, the **Ghana National Climate Change Master Plan Action Programmes for Implementation: 2015–2020** aim to “address climate change and migration” as a policy focus area (Government of Ghana, 2015, p. 234), framing migration as an adaptation option, as “carefully planned and proactive migration can represent a significant and effective adaptation to potentially difficult conditions” (p. 234); within the Programmes, there are plans to “support relocation of settlements and economic activities to non-flood areas” (p. 39) and to have “access routes for evacuation, supply and distribution of relief items” (p. 84) in disaster contexts.

⁷ Togo and Burkina Faso are the two only States in West Africa to have submitted their NAPs to UNFCCC. All the other States are at different stages in the process of formulating and implementing their NAPs. Benin was expected to submit its NAP in 2020 (UNDP, 2019).

ECOWAS and disaster management policy

ECOWAS adopted its **Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction** in 2006 based on ARSDRR and its 2006–2015 Programme of Action (Orago, 2019, p. 329). It contains one reference to evacuation in the context of preparedness and response planning. Its Programme of Action for Implementation (2010–2014) only refers to emergency safe shelters (Yonetani, 2019, p. 40).

Nonetheless, some ECOWAS member States' national DRR strategies have more explicit references to human mobility. For example, Côte d'Ivoire's National Disaster Risk Management Strategy and Plan of Action (French: *Stratégie nationale de gestion des risques de catastrophes et plan d'action*) of 2011 mentions the preparation of a Displacement and Relocation Plan for people living in precarious areas of Abidjan that are vulnerable to floods (Yonetani, 2019, p. 36). The country's National Action Plan for Capacity Building in Disaster Risk Reduction 2016–2020 (French: *Plan d'action national pour le renforcement des capacités en matière de RRC en Côte d'Ivoire 2016-2020*) of 2016 also refers to displacement due to "the worsening, multiple impacts of increasing coastal erosion" (Yonetani, 2019, p. 29). Cabo Verde's National DRR Strategy (2017) also makes several mentions of human mobility, including rural exodus and forced migration resulting from drought that happened before 1975 (Government of Cabo Verde, 2017, pp. 19 and 21). Most importantly, the National DRR Strategy refers to the 2016 Brava Island Contingency Plan, which defines measures for a potential complete evacuation of the island in case of volcanic activity (Government of Cabo Verde, 2017, p. 87). A majority of ECOWAS States have developed their respective national DRR strategies, but these remain rarely implemented (Gemenne et al., 2017, p. 319). ECOWAS plays a central role in tackling this challenge. Indeed, during a data collection workshop organized in 2019 by researchers from the North-West University for ECOWAS Member States, Burkina Faso highlighted the role of ECOWAS and the support it provides in DRR capacity development (van Niekerk et al., 2020, pp. 185–186).

There are several institutional structures within ECOWAS dedicated to disaster risk reduction, such as the Disaster Management Technical Committee, Ministerial Disaster Management Steering Committee, Inter-Departmental Coordinating Committee, and Disaster Management Unit. Similar to the African Union's institutional structure, the ECOWAS Humanitarian and Social Affairs Directorate and the **ECOWAS Humanitarian Policy** play a central role in disaster risk reduction at the subregional level (Gemenne et al., 2017, p. 325). The Humanitarian Policy focuses on four priority areas – (a) conflict, (b) natural disasters, (c) human-made disasters, and (d) mixed-migration and refugee protection – and recognizes and addresses disasters as a cause of displacement (ECOWAS, 2012, p. 10).

2.3.2. The Community of Sahel–Saharan States

The Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN–SAD) was established in 1998 and recognized as an REC by the African Union in 2006. It counts 29 member States, including all 15 ECOWAS member States and Mauritania. While the focus of CEN–SAD is peace and security among its Member States, it has given increased attention to environmental protection and management (African Union, 2019a, p. 56). The adoption of the **Great Green Wall** initiative in 2007, based on a CEN–SAD decision from 2005, is an example. To combat the impacts of desertification, the initiative aims to plant trees "across the entire width of Africa". More broadly, it participates in land restoration and aims to address, notably, "climate change, drought, famine, conflict and migration" (Great Green Wall, n.d.). As of 2020, 20 States were involved in the initiative, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, the Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria and Senegal.

In addition, free movement of individuals is among the objectives established by Article 1 of the Treaty Establishing the Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN–SAD, 1998). CEN–SAD drafted its own protocol, **Free Movement and Establishment of Persons within the Territory of Member States of the Community of Sahel–Saharan States**, based on the ECOWAS protocols (United Nations

Economic Commission for Africa, 2012, p. 70), although the text had not yet been adopted as of 2020. Due to its overlap with the ECOWAS region, however, part of the region already benefits from the implementation of ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol (Wood, 2019a, p. 25).

2.4. Other initiatives

Another important mechanism in the region is the Club du Sahel, founded in 1976 between Sahelian countries and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member States, with the aim of raising international support and awareness of the drought crisis in the Sahel. Since 2001, its membership has included all West African countries and was renamed the **Sahel and West Africa Club** (SWAC). ECOWAS, the West African Economic and Monetary Union, and CILSS became members in 2011. SWAC supported the development of several regional strategies and policies, including the 2005 ECOWAS Common Agricultural Policy, the 2010 ECOWAS Commission Strategic Vision for 2020, and the 2008 ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration (SWAC, n.d.).

The intergovernmental **Sustainability, Stability and Security (3S) Initiative**, supported by the UNCCD, participates in the debate on drivers of migration and instability in Africa (IOM and UNCCD, 2019, p. 32). It was established at the MIDWA meeting in 2016 following a request by ministers of interior of ECOWAS member States to address migration and instability caused by land degradation. Launched by Morocco and Senegal, and endorsed by African heads of State and government at the African Action Summit in 2016, the 3S Initiative has a task force composed of 14 member States, of which 8 are West African, namely, Benin, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Ghana, Mali, the Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. The 3S Initiative has three objectives: (a) creating 2 million green jobs for vulnerable groups, including migrants and displaced populations, through investment in restoration and sustainable land management, (b) strengthening access to land and tenure rights to increase sense of belonging to a specific community; and (c) prevention of forced displacement by improving preparedness and early-warning systems for drought and other disasters (3S Initiative, 2019).

The **Lake Chad Basin Commission** (LCBC) was established by the Governments of the Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad in 1964. The Central African Republic and Libya are member States, while the Sudan, Egypt, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Republic of the Congo are observer States (LCBC, 2016a). The mandate of the LCBC is to manage Lake Chad and its water resources sustainably and equitably, preserve the ecosystems of the Conventional Basin, and promote cross-border integration, peace and security. It also has a specific focus on climate change adaptation (German Corporation for International Cooperation and LCBC, 2015), as well as agropastoralism (LCBC, 2016a). The LCBC developed the Lake Chad Development and Climate Resilience Action Plan (PADLT) for 2016–2025, which aims to contribute to food security, employment, social inclusion and improved living conditions. In the PADLT, LCBC countries recognize the migration implications of the Lake's shrinkage and of climate change more broadly (LCBC, 2015, p. 10–22), and states “Providing assistance to displaced persons” as one of its short-term objectives (p. 26).

2.5. Summary

This chapter has counted some 50 policy frameworks, strategies, actors and mechanisms working on addressing human mobility in the contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation that are relevant to West Africa – many more exist. This is a diverse set of initiatives that put different parts of the human mobility–environment nexus at the centre of their approach, including migration management, climate change, disaster risk reduction, pastoralism, agriculture and humanitarian action, as well as adopting different ways of working, regional cooperation, subregional dialogue and international consensus. While they could benefit from more stringent implementation and coordination among themselves, the global, regional and subregional policy instruments constitute a framework for managing human mobility in West Africa in the contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation.

At the global level, the Global Compact for Migration, the Global Compact on Refugees, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework provide the international community with key international standards for addressing human mobility in the contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation at the regional, subregional, national and local levels. Among this diverse multitude of initiatives, the Global Compact for Migration, which has been cascaded down to the continental level (Africa) and subregional level (West Africa), is the key framework for addressing movements in these contexts. The implementation of these frameworks is now necessary and to which regional cooperation would be fundamental.

At the regional level, the policy frameworks of the African Union, including the Revised MPFA, the Kampala Convention, and the Humanitarian Policy Framework already address these movements. An important entry point within the African Union is the Three-Year Implementation Plan of Action for the Global Compact for Migration in Africa, as its Priority 7 aligns with Objective 2 of the Global Compact for Migration. Concerning disaster risk reduction, the African Union declared a priority action in the 2018 Tunis Declaration to understand the interlinkages between climate change, disasters, displacement, conflict and development, as well as finding durable solutions to forced displacement.

At the subregional level, the efforts of ECOWAS stand out as the most relevant for West Africa. ECOWAS catalyses international and regional commitments and directions, and applies them at the subregional and national levels, in the process drawing from national and subnational examples of efforts from States to form a subregional approach to the implementation of regional and global frameworks. It has adopted various policies on human mobility, including a Common Approach on Migration and a Transhumance Protocol. The ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement is a key pathway for people to move as a climate change adaptation strategy. The forthcoming ECOWAS Regional Migration Policy, set to focus specifically on migration and climate change, shows great potential. Engagement with other dialogue processes and initiatives, such as MIDWA, the 3S Initiative and SWAC, should also be considered. The MIDWA process under ECOWAS, specifically, is a key State forum that puts mobility at the centre of a proposed approach to find solutions in the areas of environmental migration, disaster displacement and planned relocation.



A village in the middle of the Mauritanian desert. Over time, sand carried by violent winds destroys houses built of *banco* (adobe).
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3. Recommendations for the way forward

Taking into account the evidence presented and the policy overview provided by this desk review, West African governments, governmental partners outside of Africa and donors, relevant stakeholders of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and civil society could consider the following recommendations to address human mobility in the contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation in the region. These recommendations are aligned with those of the UNFCCC Task Force on Displacement (UNFCCC, 2018), as well as of IOM and UNCCD, specifically on the migration-land degradation nexus (IOM and UNCCD, 2019), and with the commitments expressed in the Global Compact for Migration (UNGA, 2018a) and in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (UNGA, 2015).

1. Advance the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration, especially Objectives 2 and 5, at the regional, subregional and national levels through the Three-Year Implementation Plan of Action for the Global Compact for Migration in Africa (2020–2022), the ECOWAS Regional Migration Policy and MIDWA.
2. Create synergies among the African Union's RECs, such as ECOWAS and CEN-SAD, as well as the RCPs, such as MIDWA, to facilitate the development of safe, orderly and regular migration pathways in contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation, to address disaster displacement and share effective practices in planned relocation.
3. Enhance collaboration between ECOWAS and IOM, UNHCR and PDD, to provide support for integrated implementation of the Global Compact for Migration with:
 - (a) The Global Compact on Refugees, including via the Asylum Capacity Support Group;
 - (b) The Paris Agreement, in line with the activities specified in the UNFCCC Task Force on Displacement Plan of Action;
 - (c) The Sendai Framework, among others, by promoting and piloting the Words into Action Guidelines on Disaster Displacement, and the Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation Integrated Human Mobility Assessment Tool.
4. Contribute to and support the Global Compact for Migration regional reviews for Africa and the International Migration Review Forum, with a focus on environmental migration, disaster displacement and planned relocation.

Specifically, contribute to ECOWAS regional consultations on the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration, including by organizing sessions dedicated to its Objectives 2 and 5, including via MIDWA; sharing information within and across the regional and national United Nations Networks on Migration on the work addressing environmental migration, disaster displacement and planned relocation; encouraging participation of CSOs from and working in the region, with a specific focus on diasporas; contributing to knowledge-sharing via the United Nations Network on Migration Knowledge Platform, especially by providing relevant information, data and knowledge, and by sharing research, publications, policy guidance and good practices on environmental migration, disaster displacement and planned relocation.

5. Advance the implementation of free movement protocols at the regional and subregional levels to allow for safe, orderly and regular population movements in contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation.
6. Share and implement good practices stemming from regional State-led initiatives, such as the 3S Initiative and MIDWA.
7. Strengthen the consideration of environmental migration, disaster displacement and planned relocation in relevant regional, State-led initiatives, including MIDWA, via its existing thematic working group on “climate change, land degradation, desertification, environment and migration,” including by:
 - (a) Organizing regional MIDWA meetings to facilitate a common understanding between policy and decision makers and planners from different countries and to identify gaps and challenges, and good practices and opportunities to address human mobility in contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation;
 - (b) Contributing to the Global Compact for Migration regional reviews and the International Migration Review Forum, with a focus on environmental migration, disaster displacement and planned relocation;
 - (c) Developing terms of reference and a workplan for the MIDWA thematic working group on “climate change, land degradation, desertification, environment and migration” that identify its priorities and establish its purpose, scope of work, authority, membership, meeting arrangements and reporting mechanisms, among others;
 - (d) Fundraising for and implementing the potential workplan of the Technical Working Group on Climate Change, Land Degradation, Desertification, Environment and Migration;
 - (e) Communicating and advocating for better understanding of the links between migration, displacement and planned relocation, and disasters, climate change and environmental degradation;
 - (f) Creating synergies with other RCPs on migration already addressing the links between migration, displacement and planned relocation, and disasters, climate change and environmental degradation, including in Africa, the Americas and the Pacific.
8. Develop national implementation plans for the Global Compact for Migration, in line with the document, “Implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration: Guidance for governments and all relevant stakeholders”.
9. Strengthen and cross-fertilize existing national policies, strategies and laws on migration management, climate change and disaster risk reduction relevant to human mobility in contexts of disasters, adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation, to find solutions for people to stay, solutions for people to move and solutions for people on the move, specifically:
 - (a) Allow for the free movement of people, including pastoralists, in contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation;
 - (b) Allow for the planned relocation of populations to safe areas, as a last resort, in contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation;
 - (c) Strengthen and monitor the effective protection of people on the move within and across borders in contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation;
 - (d) Review or develop national land use, development and agricultural policies that include issues related to migration, displacement and planned relocation;
 - (e) Foster partnership across the relevant ministries and with the relevant local, regional and international actors in the fields of human mobility, climate change, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action, development and peacebuilding.

10. Enhance evidence, data collection and analysis, as well as methodology development, to reduce the limitations of the knowledge in the areas of environmental migration, disaster displacement and planned relocation:
 - (a) Assess implementation levels in West Africa of regional, subregional and national policies addressing human mobility in contexts of disasters, adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation;
 - (b) Explore the potential of existing bilateral agreements and transnational cooperation in West Africa to address and manage human mobility in contexts of disasters, adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation;
 - (c) Explore the need for an additional protocol to address the application of free movement in contexts of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation;
 - (d) Develop an overview for West Africa of existing data, data sources and methodologies on human mobility in contexts of disasters, adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation, to identify gaps, challenges, good practices and opportunities;
 - (e) Enhance existing data monitoring and analysis on environmental migration, disaster displacement and planned relocation in West Africa, including by linking environmental data with migration data;
 - (f) Develop an understanding of the links, in the West Africa context, between:
 - (i) Slow-onset events and processes and human mobility;
 - (ii) Coastal erosion and human mobility;
 - (iii) Environmental and conflict drivers in relation to human mobility;
 - (iv) Changes in pastoralism due to environmental drivers;
 - (v) Urbanization, the environment and human mobility;
 - (vi) Health, human mobility and the environment.

Annex. Relevant information and data on West African countries

Table A1. Key characteristics and memberships in regional and international organizations, communities and processes

Country	Geographic type	Predominant language	Vulnerable country?	Sahel country?	African Union member?	ECOWAS member?	CEN-SAD member?	MIDWA member?	IOM Member (with a country office)?	UNHCR member?	UNHCR office?	PDD Steering Group member?
Benin	Coastal	French	LDC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Burkina Faso	Landlocked	French	LDC, LLDC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Cabo Verde	Island	Portuguese	SIDS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Côte d'Ivoire	Coastal	French	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Gambia	Coastal	English	LDC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Ghana	Coastal	English	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Guinea	Coastal	French	LDC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Guinea-Bissau	Coastal	Portuguese	LDC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Liberia	Coastal	English	LDC, SIDS	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Mali	Landlocked	French	LDC, LLDC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Mauritania	Coastal	French	LDC	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Observer	Yes	No	No	No
Niger	Landlocked	French	LDC, LLDC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Nigeria	Coastal	English	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Senegal	Coastal	French	LDC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sierra Leone	Coastal	English	LDC	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Togo	Coastal	French	LDC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
TOTAL	Coastal: 12; Island: 1; Landlocked: 3	English: 5; French: 9; Portuguese: 2	Vulnerable: 13	Sahel countries: 12	African Union members: 16	ECOWAS members: 15	CEN-SAD members: 16	MIDWA members and observers: 16	IOM Members (with country offices): 16	UNHCR members: 9	UNHCR offices: 9	PDD Steering Group members: 1

Source: ECOWAS, 2016b; UNECA, n.d.; IOM, n.d.a; UNHCR, n.d.; CILSS, n.d.; UN-OHRLS, 2020a, 2020b and 2020c.

Table A2. Annual volume of new disaster-induced internal displacement, 2008–2019

Country	Year											
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Benin	150 000	40 000	275 000		10 000	15 000			960	3 500	23 000	5 000
Burkina Faso	28 000	150 000	20 000			1 800		3 700	18 000	8 200	5 100	
Cabo Verde							2 500	190	300			
Côte d'Ivoire		10 000				78	4 500				3 200	720
Gambia	400		25 000		7 700	400			4 600	880		4 000
Ghana	14 000	52 000		49 000		31 000		9 300	7 900	23 000	61 000	16 000
Guinea				4 500		300		34 000	490	710	3 900	18
Guinea-Bissau	750		2 000								3 700	410
Liberia	1 000						650		10 000	970	15 000	600
Mali	2 500		5 800	18 000	9 000	24 000		400	8 000	6 800	19 000	6 600
Mauritania			5 000			4 600				2 900	450	6 600
Niger	4 300	5 600	205 000	28 000	540 000	201 000	47 000	38 000	46 000	189 000	40 000	121 000
Nigeria		140 000	560 000	6 300	3 894 000	117 000	3 000	100 000	78 000	122 000	613 000	157 000
Senegal		264 000	7 800	1 600	20 000	13 000			24 000	630	2	4 400
Sierra Leone						8 400				12 000		5 300
Togo	2 000		50 000			120		5 000		50		
TOTAL	202 950	661 600	1 155 600	107 400	4 480 700	416 698	57 650	190 590	198 250	370 640	787 352	327 648

Source: IDMC, 2020d. (Some figures might differ from the annual IDMC Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID), as these are the figures that have been validated through internal quality assurance and external peer review.)

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