THE IGAD YOUTH POLICY 2023

FOREWORD

Quantum Leap to a Resilient, Peaceful and Prosperous IGAD Region Youth

The IGAD Youth Policy marks a significant milestone in the array of impactful policy documents crafted under the inclusive approach of IGAD. It stands as a departure from previous silo-type initiatives, reflecting a more comprehensive and collaborative effort that engaged diverse stakeholders at the national, Regional, and Continental levels.

The IGAD Youth Policy Framework of 2023 exemplifies IGAD's unwavering commitment to the pressing call for substantial and productive engagement of the region's youth across all IGAD Structures. This includes their involvement in promoting Regional Integration and fostering Peace and Security.

It is, therefore, my distinct privilege to present this policy as the official IGAD Youth Policy Framework. Its purpose is to institutionalize youth-centred programming within the broader context of IGAD's development and integration initiatives. Furthermore, it sets clear benchmarks and guidelines for Member States' endeavors to engage youth in respective national development and governance processes. This framework places the development and participation of youth at the very core of all IGAD integration endeavors.

To realize the envisioned benefits of this policy, all policy implementers, Member States, IGAD coordination mechanisms, and all other stakeholders are urged to align their actions and programs with the promotion and sustenance of meaningful youth engagement at every level of governance. This includes youth participation in development planning and implementation, peacebuilding and security efforts, environmental conservation and climate change mitigation, research and development initiatives, technology and innovation pursuits, as well as sports and culture activities, among other thematic areas identified in this Policy.

While the development of this policy was an extensive and participatory process, featuring input and contributions from key government institutions of Member States and a wide array of stakeholders from both within and outside the region, its effective implementation hinges greatly upon the goodwill and support of Member States, as well as IGAD's longstanding and new Development Partners and Donor Agencies.

I firmly believe that the adoption and implementation of this Policy will offer a clear roadmap for our Member States, Development Partners, Regional Youth Networks, Youth Serving Organizations, and the Youth within the IGAD Region. It will guide their efforts in youth development planning, resource mobilization, resource allocation, program implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and learning. Ultimately, it will propel the region towards a future characterized by Resilient, Peaceful, and Prosperous Youth.

H. E. DR WORKNEH GEBEYEHU
IGAD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

As we gather here today to celebrate a monumental achievement, I am reminded of the profound impact that collaboration and unwavering commitment can have on shaping the future. Our journey towards the development of the IGAD Youth Policy has been nothing short of extraordinary. It's a testament to what can be accomplished when visionary leadership, dedicated partners, and passionate individuals come together in the spirit of progress. Today, I stand before you not only as a witness to history but as a fervent advocate for the transformative power of youth empowerment and regional cooperation. Together, we have achieved a remarkable milestone that will shape the lives of countless young people across the IGAD region.

The successful realization of the IGAD Secretariat's mission was made possible by the unwavering commitment and expert support of our esteemed Member States. Their contributions, encompassing strategic guidance, meticulous consultations, comprehensive reviews, and the validation of the draft policy, proved to be indispensable.

Of equal significance was the pivotal role played by the Regional Council of Ministers responsible for Youth Affairs. Their goodwill and technical assistance have been instrumental, underlining the essence of collective effort in achieving our objectives.

Let's not forget the invaluable input provided by the Technical Youth Experts from the Ministries responsible for Youth Affairs and Foreign Affairs within our Member States. Their unwavering technical support and continuous dedication ensured that the policy remained aligned with the dynamic policies and development trends prevalent across IGAD Member States.

Furthermore, the contributions of the National Youth Councils (NYCs) and Youth Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) representatives from IGAD Member States were both timely and invaluable. Their active involvement and insights enriched the development of the IGAD Youth Policy, ensuring that it remains attuned to the needs and aspirations of the region's youth. We deeply appreciate their unwavering commitment to the advancement of youth-related initiatives within the IGAD framework.

The conceptualization and development of the IGAD Youth Policy stand as the fruits of concerted efforts, unwavering dedication, and effective teamwork within the IGAD Secretariat. In this regard, our heartfelt gratitude extends to the IGAD Secretariat staff and Specialized Offices, under the leadership of H.E. Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, IGAD's Executive Secretary. Their invaluable insights and technical leadership in shaping the content of the thirteen policy priority areas outlined in this Policy have been instrumental.

To our esteemed partners on this transformative journey, we wish to express our deep appreciation for your tireless efforts and steadfast support. The Horn of Africa Youth Network (HoAYN) and Save the Children International (SCI) have been unwavering pillars throughout the policy development processes. Our sincere gratitude extends to the entire team at the Horn of Africa Youth Network Secretariat and the Steering Committee, as well as SCI's Regional Programming Unit, East and Southern Africa, for their unwavering solidarity and collaboration.

Lastly, our profound appreciation goes out to the members of the Inter-Agency Working Group, the Africa Youth Trust, the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), Pan African Policy Institute, Megacap Limited, and the Institute of Applied Studies and Research (IASR). Your exemplary leadership and expert guidance throughout the phases of research, development, and production of this Policy have played an invaluable role in our collective success.

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MME. FATHIA ALWAN

DIRECTOR, HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION OF IGAD

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS USED IN THE POLICY

Terminology	Operational definition
Creative Economy	The Creative Economy is an analytical category that encompasses a very diverse array of sectors. It includes heritage and cultural products, such as handicrafts, and it incorporates the software designers that fashion the digital economy and influence the future of the whole of society.
Creative Industries	Creative Industry or Economy implies creative goods and services including intellectual property, ideas, and imaginations – in areas such as arts and crafts, advertising, architecture, fashion and design, film and other audio-visual products, photography, music, performing arts, publishing, research and development, software, computer games including computer graphics, electronic publishing and TV/Radio broadcast series.
Decent Work	Decent work refers to productive work for young women and men in conditions of freedom, equity, security, respect for fundamental human rights and human dignity and the work should pay a fair remuneration and benefits to the employee or worker including all relevant and applicable statutory benefits.
Diaspora	Refers to the movement, migration or scattering of a people, and about this policy, the youth away from an established or ancestral homeland to new areas or foreign lands that are not their original homes.
Digital Economy	Refers to the scientific and technical use or application of information communication technology to create or adapt, market or consume goods and services and include among other functionalities; digital banking, telemedicine, e-commerce, virtual education, mobile technology and smartphone apps, virtual meetings apps, telemarketing biotechnology artificial intelligence, Internet of Things (IoT), Digital Supply Networks, Hyperconnectivity Social Media Networks, and all related and connected purposes.
Economic Integration	Refers to the unification of economic policies between and within different member states of IGAD through the reduction or elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade, especially those that limit young women and men's participation in regional trade and commerce.
Equity	Refers to the principle of fairness, which implies making sure that personal and social circumstances of the young women and men, for instance, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, religion, and geo-political orientations are not a barrier to accessing any service or opportunities intended the youth population or a barrier to achieving youth's full potential in social, political, cultural and environmental spheres.
Forced Displacement	Refers to an involuntary or coerced movement of a person (s) away from their home or home region either to IDP Camps or Refugee Camps or to unknown destinations (dispersion)
Gender	The AU GEWE definition of Gender is adopted by this policy. Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female, and the relationships

between women and men and girls and boys, as well as relationships between women and between men.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)	GBV refers to all forms of violence – physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence, as well as the various forms of harmful traditional practices widely practiced in countries within the IGAD Region
Gender Equality	The AU Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Strategy is adopted by this Policy. Gender equality as used in this policy implies that women and men, girls and boys, enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protection.
Gender Equity	Gender equity is defined in this policy, therefore, as a process of being fair to both men and women and to ensure fairness, strategies and measures must often be available to compensate for women's historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field.
Green Economy	Refers to sustainable development investments that result in improved human well-being and social equity while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities (UNEP, 2011a). In other words, it refers to mainstreaming the environment into all socio-economic development undertakings, poverty reduction and sustainable development.
Inclusion	Is the process of improving the terms for at-risk or disadvantaged individuals' or groups' participation in society through enhancing their abilities and capabilities, creating and availing opportunities for socio-economic development and empowerment, increasing access to resources (goods, services and other enabling factors of production), upscaling their voice and ensuring respect for rights for the full participation in economic, social, political and cultural life and to enjoy high-quality of life that is considered normal in the societies in which they live and function.
Internally Displaced Persons (IDP)	The United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement definition of IDP is adopted in this Policy. IDP, therefore, refers to the person (s) who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes and or home areas or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflicts, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters and catastrophes, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border.
Meaningful Youth Engagement	The term "*Meaningful Engagement of Youth*" refers to "an inclusive, intentional, mutually respectful partnership between the adolescents, youth and young adults whereby power is shared, the respective contribution is valued, and young people's ideas, innovations, perspectives, skills, expertise and unique strengths are integrated into the design and delivery of policies, laws, programs, strategies, funding mechanisms and organizations at national, regional, continental and global levels".
Migrant	Is any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a state away from his or her habitual (acquired or ancestral) residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status, (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary, (3) what the causes of the movement are; or (4) what the length of stay is.
Quality	Quality is a dynamic concept that changes and evolves with time, as well as the social, economic, and environmental context. Even though there is no universally accepted definition of the term "Quality", the IGAD Youth Policy defines the term in two contexts: (i) Effectiveness of the Meaningful Youth Engagement Strategies and Processes; (ii) Ability of the Meaningful Youth Engagement Strategies and Processes to achieve their intended and desired purposes and outcome.
Regional Integration	The concept of regional integration in this policy is used to imply specific and strategic efforts to be undertaken by IGAD and its Member States towards the building, nurturing and developing policy, legal, institutional, programming and budgetary structures and instruments intended to effectively domesticate implement, monitor, evaluate, research on and learn from this policy.
Technopreneurs	Refers to individuals or groups of youth who set up and operate businesses or consultancy services related to information and communication technologies including research and development of ICT Software and hardware products.

Women Empowerment	The definition by the AU's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy Framework is adopted. Women Empowerment is concerned with strategic and legally backed actions and programs that enable women to gain power and control over their own lives and that it involves strategic and purposive investment in awareness-raising, building self-confidence and esteem, expansion of choices and opportunities, increasing access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions which reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality.
Youth Civil Society Organizations	These include national and international NGOs, officially recognized Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), CBOs, youth-led and youth-serving trade unions, youth-led and youth-focused professional and artisan associations, cultural and traditional institutions as well as auxiliary entities such as the National Societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, media organizations among others.
Youth Participation	Youth participation is the active and structured engagement of young people throughout their own communities, and in the context of the policy, across the IGAD Region.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AfDB	African Development Bank
AGA	Africa Governance Architecture
AML	Anti-Money Laundering
APAYE	Africa Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AYC	African Youth Charter (2016)
CFT	Countering Financing of Terrorism
CNERP	Costed National Education Response Plan
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CPAs	Ceasefires and Peace Agreements
CPMR	Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DDR	Disarmament-Demobilization-Reintegration
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DFID	Department for International Development
EAC	East African Community
ECCAs	Economic Community of Central Africa States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECPF	ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific
ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FCAs	Fragile and Conflict Affected States
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HESPI	Horn Economic and Social Policy Institute
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HoAYN	Horn of Africa Youth Network
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IGADD	Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa Development
NMPFs	National Migration Policy Framework
NYC	National Youth Council
REC / RECs	Regional Economic Community/ Communities
RM/ RMs	Regional Mechanism(s)
RMPF	Regional Migration Policy Framework
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEZs	Special Economic Zones
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
YCS	Youth Culture and Sports

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The IGAD Youth Policy of 2023 stands as a pivotal sectoral policy document within the realm of regional youth development and empowerment. It has been meticulously crafted to serve as a guiding compass for IGAD and its Member States in the formulation and execution of effective and impactful youth engagement strategies.

This policy aims to foster consistency in the approach taken by IGAD in addressing youth-related challenges and issues across the IGAD region. Member States are encouraged to utilize it as a foundational document and technical reference for youth-focused programming, development planning at the national level, and for establishing partnerships and collaborative networks, with IGAD serving as the central hub for all youth-related actions at the Member State level.

Furthermore, the policy endeavors to ensure the substantial involvement of youth in economic, social, cultural, and political spheres. It seeks to establish frameworks and processes that perpetuate meaningful youth engagement at all decision-making levels and within the overarching context of regional development.

The IGAD Youth Policy is underpinned by a core philosophy, encompassing its motto, vision, mission statements, and core values and principles. This philosophy serves as the guiding light for interpreting and applying the policy. Additionally, the policy outlines the concept of meaningful youth engagement and the pillars designed to effectively address the current situation in the IGAD Region.

At its heart, this policy envisions a resilient, peaceful, and prosperous IGAD Region where empowered youth enjoy a high quality of life. It strives to promote meaningful youth engagement and active participation, driven by four core values and principles: Accessibility, Equity, and Gender Equality; Accountability, Good Governance, and Transparency; Inclusivity and Participation; and Partnerships and Alliance Building. These principles are advanced through a set of strategic objectives:

a. To establish policy, legal, programming, and institutional frameworks and structures for meaningful youth engagement and facilitate their active participation in realizing a resilient, peaceful, and prosperous IGAD Region.
b. To encourage member states to mainstream youth issues in policies, programs, laws, budgets, and resource allocation at both regional and national levels.
c. To serve as the foundation for meaningful youth engagement with IGAD and its organs in co-design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, research, learning, and knowledge management of youth-centered socio-economic and socio-political development plans and programs.
d. To ensure effective youth engagement and participation in Regional Peace Building Initiatives, Conflict Prevention and Management, Socio-Economic Development, and Regional Integration.

The policy development process entailed a comprehensive analysis of the youth situation in the IGAD Region, focusing on the core issues faced by its youth population. This analysis resulted in the identification of 13 priority areas, each accompanied by a well-defined policy objective and corresponding strategic actions.

Inclusion and Participation are key catalysts to ensure that youth issues and challenges are meaningfully integrated into all sectors of Regional Development Planning, Budgeting, Resource Mobilization, and Program Development and Implementation. The policy also outlines a framework for youth-centered development program monitoring, evaluation, knowledge management, and lesson sharing, with recommendations acted upon by relevant stakeholders.

The policy recognizes and appreciates the policy actions, initiatives, and action plans already undertaken by Member States. It seeks to invigorate and accelerate these responsive policy actions for the benefit of the youth population in the IGAD Region.

Moreover, the policy framework places a strong emphasis on Collaboration, Capacity Building, Networking, and Partnerships among IGAD Member States, as well as with the AU, UN, Bilateral and Multilateral Development Partners, the Private Sector, Universities, Research Institutions, and youth-serving CSOs in the IGAD Region. It underscores the manifold potential benefits of forging and sustaining strategic partnerships and networks, highlighting IGAD's strength in engaging its partners to pursue its core mandates.

To facilitate policy implementation, comprehensive mechanisms and coordination structures have been put in place, supported by a robust institutional framework and a detailed policy implementation matrix and performance monitoring plan.

The validation and implementation of the IGAD Youth Policy adhere to administrative procedures guided by the provisions and implications of Articles 20, 21, and 23 of the 1996 Agreement Establishing IGAD.

SECTION ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT ANALYSIS

1.1 Context of the IGAD Policy 2023

1.1.1 The establishment and mandate of IGAD

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) was created in 1996 as a successor of the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) that was founded earlier in 1986 to particularly deal with issues of drought and desertification in the Horn of Africa.

Following the ravaging impacts of drought, widespread famine, ecological degradation and adverse economic hardships in the IGAD Region, the six countries of the region, that is, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda took the lead action between 1983 and 1984 through the support of United Nations (UN) to establish an intergovernmental body for the development and drought control for the region. The State of Eritrea became the seventh member after attaining its independence in 1993 while the State of South Sudan joined IGAD in 2011.

On 21 March 1996 in Nairobi, the Assembly of Heads of States and Government signed the "***Letter of Instrument to Amend the IGADD Charter",*** thereby establishing a revitalized IGADD with a new name and broadened mandate. IGADD was transformed into, "Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). IGAD's new expanded areas of focus as stipulated in Article 7 of the Agreement Establishing IGAD, enlists the objectives of IGAD as follows:

1. Promote joint development strategies and gradually harmonize macro-economic policies and programs in the social, technological and scientific fields;
2. Harmonize policies concerning trade, customs, transport, communications, agriculture, natural resources and environment, and promote free movement of goods, services, and people within the IGAD Region.
3. Create an enabling environment for foreign, cross-border and domestic trade and investment;
4. Initiate and promote programs and projects to achieve regional food security and sustainable development of natural resources and environmental protection, and encourage and assist efforts of Member States to collectively combat drought and other natural and man-made disasters and their consequences;
5. Develop and improve a coordinated and complementary infrastructure, in the areas of transport, telecommunications and energy in the IGAD Region;
6. Promote peace and stability in the IGAD Region and create mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of inter-State and intra-State conflicts through dialogue;

7. Mobilize resources for the implementation of emergency, short-term, medium-term and long-term programs within the framework of regional cooperation;
8. Facilitate, promote and strengthen cooperation in research development and application in science and technology.
9. Provide capacity building and training at Regional and national levels; and
10. Generate and disseminate development information in the IGAD Region

1.1.2 Geography and demography

The IGAD Region stretches over an area of 5.2 million square kilometers (Km^2) and comprise 8 Member States: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.

The IGAD Region has a population of over 230 million people characterized by high natural population growth rates with an average population density of approximately 30 persons per Km^2. However, there exist significant variations in the population density between the IGAD Countries ranging from 14.5 persons per Km^2 in Somalia to above 95 persons per Km^2 in Uganda. The population density variations are even much more pronounced between different ecological zones.

Rapid urbanization has recently been witnessed across IGAD Region, causing rural-to-urban migration, especially among young persons aged between 15 and 35. The most populated cities are Addis Ababa, Nairobi and Khartoum each with populations above three million. The challenge of urbanization and consequently migration possess a great threat to regional stability especially where the Region's main economic backdrop is agriculture (crop production, livestock husbandry, and aquaculture/fishing). The bulging population in the Region relies heavily on its primary farming activities for food and nutrition, export earnings, and as a source of employment for over 80% of the IGAD Regional Population.

About 55% of IGAD Region's total population are in the youth age bracket. This proportion is projected to rise in the near future, with the observation that more than 1.4 billion of the 2.45 billion (57%) people estimated to be added to the global population between 2017 and 2055 will be added in Africa. Just like the case of the whole of Africa, the population proportion within the age of 15 – 35 years is significantly high, accounting for between 29% - 37%, in six HoA Countries of Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda.

1.1.3 Challenges and Issues Affecting the Youth in the IGAD Region

The IGAD State of the Region Report (2020) has identified the mitigating effects of drought and environmental degradation, boosting agricultural production, maintaining peace and security, together with facilitating sustainable management of natural resources and protecting the environment as the major long-term objectives of IGAD since 1986. According to the Report, the high population growth rates in the IGAD Region lead to bulging youthful populations, who unfortunately are not being harnessed for effective development. Other issues noted in the Report include poverty, climate change, weak economic bases, gender inequalities, and insecurity – all which contribute to the socio-economic and political challenges that the region faces. In addition, limited access to financial services and low public funding of youth-centric interventions and programs, factors that exist in all the Member State economies, and which require proactive legislation to turn around. Indeed, dependence on donor project-based development funding cannot be sustainable.

In particular, the following 8 issues have been prioritized by the IGAD as requiring strategic and sustainable mitigations:

1. Food insecurity
2. Poverty
3. Climate change and invariability
4. Rapid population growth and unemployment rates
5. Weak economic activities and low levels of industrialization and trade

6.	Policy coherence with other continental and regional policies and legal frameworks
7.	Gender inequality
8.	Regional insecurity and peace agenda

1.2 The IGAD Youth Policy 2023 Rationale and Justification

In the IGAD Member States, the youth comprise a larger segment of the total population, which presents both opportunities and challenges. The lives of many youths are marred with poverty, inadequate education and skills, inadequate work /employment opportunities, exploitation, exposure to violent extremism, diseases such as HIV/ AIDS, drugs and substance abuse, civil unrest, climate change and invariability and gender discrimination among others.

The environment where youth live within the IGAD Region presents a number of challenges and risks that undermines the traditional social support systems, which inhibit the capacity of the youth to negotiate and explore the opportunities to facilitate their transition into quality and self-determining adulthood.

Whereas member States have made efforts to initiate and implement various youth development programs and projects, in inter alia, on the following areas: employment, health, education and training as well as participation in the integration processes, the youth continue to experience numerous challenges that hamper the full exploitation of their potential.

The major constraints that hinder the Member States from effectively addressing the youth challenges include lack of appropriate and comprehensive policies, inadequate resources (technical and financial), lack of proper coordination mechanisms and clear institutional structures to support the realization of synergies in tackling youth challenges in the region.

IGAD recognizes that youth are a crucial asset and an important key resource in social economic and political development of the community. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Community to ensure that the youths' energies and skills are harnessed and nurtured to promote the social economic and political development of the region. Consistent with this commitment, the youth have a responsibility as well, and a duty to ensure that their aspirations, hopes and dreams are fully realized through participatory engagement in all the IGAD integration processes.

This policy document, therefore, seeks to institutionalize youth focused programming within the IGAD development and integration processes as well as set benchmarks and guidelines for Member States' mainstreaming of youth issues in national development and governance processes. It is a framework to consider development and participation of the youth at the center of all IGAD development and integration processes.

1.3 Roadmap to Developing the IGAD Youth Policy

The IGAD Youth Policy 2023 document has undergone a long journey of self-reflection, retrospective and refocusing of youth issues in the IGAD. The journey began in November 2018 with a Regional Youth Leaders Consultative meeting on meaningful youth engagement in the IGAD Region. The major outcome of this session was the ***"Norfolk Declaration"*** that initiated the long processes of forming a regional youth network besides calling upon all relevant regional youth serving organizations and stakeholders to brainstorm on the critical subject of ***"Meaningful Engagement of the Youth with IGAD".***

The outcomes of the 2018 Consultative activities led to the drafting of the IGAD Youth Engagement Strategy (2019), which has since culminated to the IGAD Youth Policy (2023).To bring on-board high-level Policy makers and Intergovernmental think tanks, IGAD Secretariat and partners organized and hosted a Regional Consultative Forum on the development of the IGAD Youth Policy. This session was hosted by the State Republic of Djibouti in November 2021. Between 7th to 12th December 2021, IGAD engaged youth led and youth serving organizations and Stakeholders in a Regional Youth Consultative

Forum for the East and Horn of Africa Region to disseminate the draft IGAD Youth Policy and to develop an Action Plan for Youth Peace and Security in the IGAD Region.

The recommendations from the Regional Youth Consultative Forum led to the crystallization and prioritization of IGAD Youth Policy, wherefore in 2021, the IGAD convened a Consultative Forum on the Development of IGAD Youth Policy. The Forum held in Djibouti was attended by a rich mix of top technical and policy formulation expatriates drawn from the Ministries of Youth Affairs in the IGAD Region, IGAD Divisions, Youth Representatives from various National Youth Councils and Youth CSOs. The purpose of this Forum was to build and galvanize synergies and rally the critical stakeholders towards the ultimate formulation and development of the IGAD Youth Policy. Not even the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions that came with it could halt the conversions. The impetus created earlier ensured that conversations continued virtually during the necessitated restrictions that were brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The validation of IGAD Youth Policy in Nairobi on the 19th and 20th December 2022 was a culmination of all the above participatory consultative processes. During the validation meeting in Nairobi, participants critically reviewed and gave inputs into the draft IGAD Youth policy with an aim to finalize the draft IGAD Youth Policy and Action Plan, before its submission to the 49th Council of Ministers Summit of IGAD in 2023.

1.4 The IGAD Youth Policy 2023 theoretical framework

1.4.1 Categories of Youth in the IGAD Region

The IGAD Youth Policy provides a unique opportunity for improving the quality of life for all IGAD youth. However, certain categories of youth have been identified and singled out for special attention by the Policy Implementers and Actors due to their levels of vulnerability and circumstances of living. These groups, therefore, need special policy-oriented programming, budgeting and resource allocation at continental, regional and national levels. These categories of youth include:

1. The youth in armed conflicts and disaster areas
2. The youth refugees and internally displaced youth
3. The unemployed youth
4. The semi-illiterate and illiterate youth
5. The female adolescent and youth migrants
6. The urban adolescent and youth migrants
7. The rural adolescents and youth
8. Children and youth migrants
9. Youth in the informal sector
10. The street youth (street urchins)
11. Domestic Servants or Helpers
12. Orphaned youths heading households
13. Youth in security agencies
14. Youth with disabilities
15. Youth who are terminally ill
16. Pastoral and nomadic youth
17. Youth in learning and training institutions
18. Youth living with HIV/AIDS and other terminal illnesses (communicable and non-communicable diseases)
19. The school drop-outs or out of school youth
20. Youth in prison
21. Youth recently released from prisons
22. Youth in the diaspora
23. Youth athletes and sports persons
24. Youth addicted to drugs and other substances of abuse
25. Employed youth below the age of 18
26. Youth hunters and gatherers
27. Youth with mental illness
28. Youth with mental handicap and mental retardation

1.4.2 Operative definition of "Youth" as it applies in this Policy

For the purpose of the IGAD Youth Policy (2022), youth is defined as [persons] between the ages of 15 and 35 years consistent with the definition of youth in the African Youth Charter (2006).

1.5 Youth Populations upon Which the Policy is Applicable

The IGAD Youth Policy 2023 is designed to address all the youth issues and challenges enlisted and described in this policy and shall be tenable within all the IGAD Member

States including Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. The policy shall be enforceable at national and regional level using policy domestication tools and apparatus applicable to a given member state.

1.6 How this document is structured

The policy is organized into six (6) Sections.

SECTION ONE presents a detailed introduction to the Policy; **SECTION TWO** outlines the IGAD Youth Policy's intrinsic philosophy including its motto, vision, mission statements, and core values and principles guiding the policy interpretation and application. Further, it outlines the concept of meaningful youth engagement and pillars that effectively responds to the IGAD Region's prevailing situation. **SECTION THREE** identifies and lists the prioritized youth issue, outlines a strategic policy response matched with strategic objectives and action plan against each stipulated issue. **SECTION FOUR** focuses on Policy implementation mechanisms and coordination through a robust and comprehensive institutional framework with **SECTION FIVE** elaborating on the policy implementation matrix and performance monitoring plan. **SECTION SIX** gives the roadmap for the adoption, ratification, enactment, coming into force of the IGAD Youth Policy and other transitional provisions.

SECTION TWO

2.0 THE IGAD YOUTH POLICY 2023 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

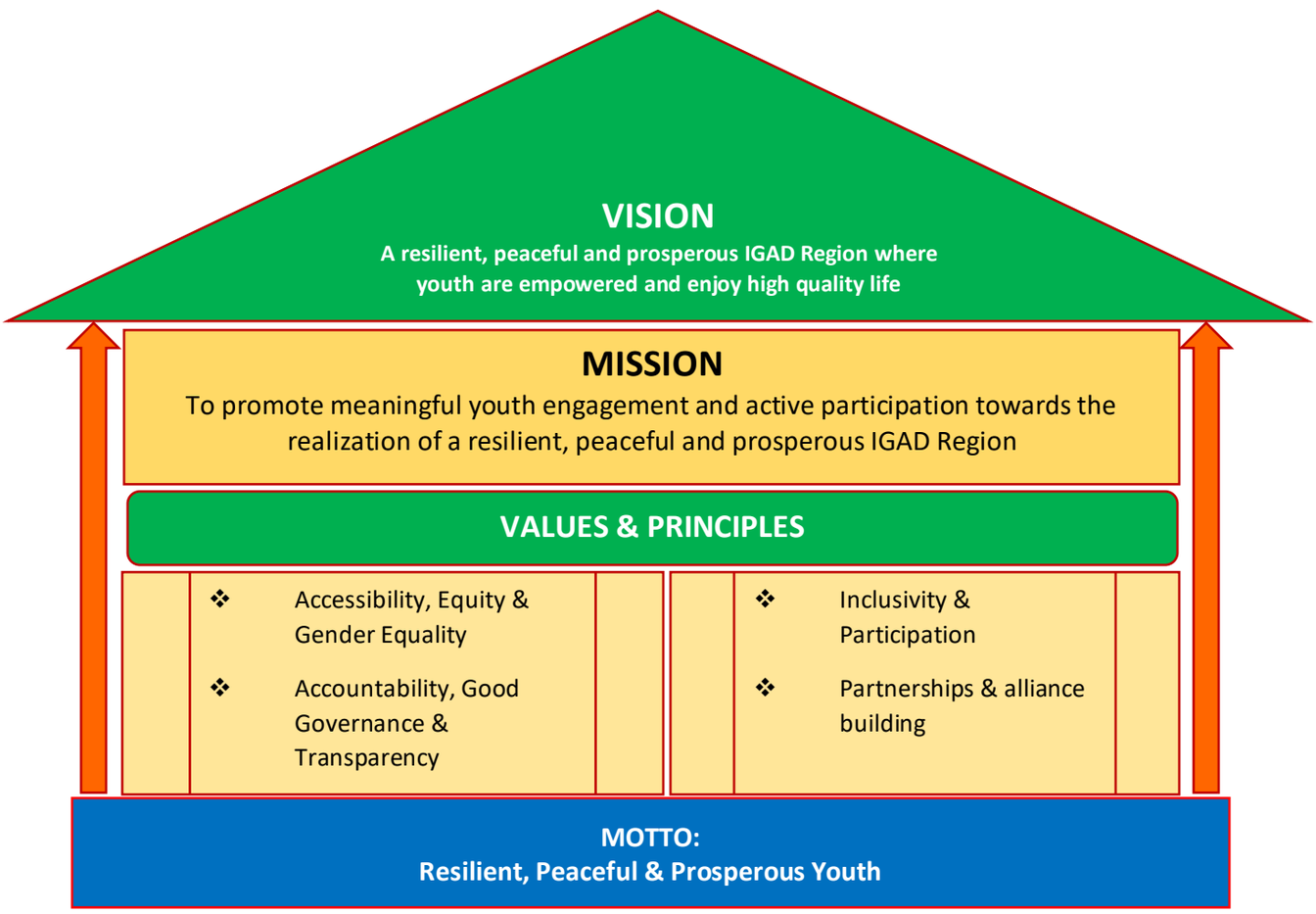
2.1 Section overview

This section elaborates the IGAD Youth Policy's intrinsic philosophy including its motto, vision, mission statements, and core values and principles guiding the policy interpretation and application. Further, it outlines the concept of meaningful youth engagement and pillars that effectively responds to the IGAD Region's prevailing situation. At the end of the section, a summary is presented that elucidates the general highlights its contents.

2.2 The Policy's Strategic Direction

The Policy strategic focus outlines the key policy statements regarding the motto, vision, mission, objectives and core values and principles as they relate to the Youth Agenda in the IGAD Region.

Figure 1: IGAD Youth Policy 2023 Strategic Philosophy



2.2.1 Motto

"Resilient, Peaceful & Prosperous Youth"

2.2.2 Vision Statement

The policy envisages a resilient, peaceful and prosperous IGAD Region where youth are empowered and enjoy high quality life.

2.2.3 Mission Statement

The policy mission is to promote meaningful youth engagement and active participation towards the realization of a resilient, peaceful and prosperous IGAD Region.

2.2.4 Policy Objectives

The objectives of the IGAD Youth Policy 2023 and Action Plan are: -

i. To establish policy, legal, programming and institutional frameworks and structures for meaningful youth engagement and facilitate their active participation towards the realization of a resilient, peaceful and prosperous IGAD Region.

ii. To provide a tool for engaging member states to mainstream youth issues in policies, programs, laws, budgets and resource allocation baskets at both Regional and National Levels.

iii. To be the basis for meaningful youth engagement with IGAD and its organs in the co-design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, research, learning and knowledge management of youth-centered socio-economic and socio-political development plans and programs.

iv. To ensure effective youth engagement and participation in Regional Peace Building Initiatives, Conflict Prevention and Management, Socio-Economic Development and Regional Integration.

2.2.5 Core Values and Principles

The core values and principles that underpin the policy are:

i. Accessibility, Equity and Gender Equality

The policy subscribes fully to the principles of equal opportunities and equal distribution of services and resources to all, regardless of sex, age, religion, political affiliation, color, creed or any other grounds. The policy also endeavors to promote principles of gender equity and equality through promotion of gender mainstreaming at public policy formulation stage, budgeting process, institutional development and resource allocation and utilization. The policy seeks to entrench the principles and practice of equitable access to and benefits from socio-economic development opportunities both at Regional and Member States levels.

ii. Accountability, Good Governance, and Transparency

The policy seeks to promote the values of good governance characterized by principles of fair administration of justice, equity, inclusivity, transparent and accounting public governance and adherence to the rule of law both at Regional and Member States Levels.

iii. Collaboration, Capacity Building, Networking and Partnerships

The IGAD Youth Policy framework places at the center of its success the vitality of Collaboration, Capacity Building, Networking and Partnerships between and among IGAD Member States and the AU, UN, Bilateral and Multilateral Development Partners, the Private Sector, Universities and Research Institutions, and youth-serving CSOs in the IGAD Region.

The policy avers that the potential benefits of forging and sustaining strategic and goal-directed networks and partnerships are manifold and that the IGAD's ability to mutually and or exclusively engage its partners has always been the main strength of IGAD in the pursuit of its core mandates. Lessons learnt by IGAD in its previous engagement with its partners shall therefore form a rich basis for position the IGAD Youth Policy into the negotiations and partnership building platforms as shall be convened by IGAD from time to time.

Whereas IGAD is appreciative to the inputs by both development partners and youth CSOs during the formative stages of formulating the IGAD Youth Policy, IGAD shall also continue to strengthen and deepen these partnerships for effective policy implementation, monitoring, evaluation, learning and knowledge management. IGAD shall also continue to seek new partnerships to help optimize policy implementation processes, outputs, outcomes and hence guarantee significant benefits to and impacts on the youth within the IGAD Region.

iv. Best Interest of the Child/Youth

The policy is guided by the best interest of the child, which ought to be used as a primary consideration in all situations, decisions, and actions concerning adolescent boys and girls (15-18 years old) to ensure their physical, psychological, and emotional safety, security, and well-being. The best interest of the child principle requires IGAD and member states to give priority to adolescents' interests in all circumstances, especially when a policy, a decision, or an action will impact them.

v. Inclusivity and Participation

In practice of this principle, IGAD shall ensure that a policy analysis, historical analysis and socio-biological correlates of either youth inclusion or exclusion in social, political, cultural and economic dimensions is conducted regularly and reported to the IGAD Heads of States and Governments' Annual Summit for review and auctioning. The import of this is to ensure that youth are significantly engaged in economic, social, cultural and political life, as well as create structures and processes that maintain the state of meaningful youth engagement at all levels of decision-making and regional development.

2.3 Meaningful Youth Engagement

2.3.1 Operational Definition of the term, "Meaningful Youth Engagement"

For the purpose of this policy, the term "Meaningful Youth Engagement" refers to "an inclusive, intentional, mutually respectful partnership between the adolescents, youth and young adults whereby power is shared, respective contribution is valued, and young people's ideas, innovations, perspectives, skills, expertise and unique strengths are integrated into the design and delivery of policies, laws, programs, strategies, funding mechanisms and organizations at national, regional, continental and global levels".

2.3.2 Policy Implications for Meaningful Youth Engagement

The IGAD, in its subscription to the AU's African Youth Charter (AU, 2016) and the UN MGCY (2017), affirms that young people have the fundamental right to actively and meaningfully engage in all matters that affect their lives and well-being. IGAD further affirms that the importance of meaningful youth engagement in co-creation, co-design and participatory development and implementation of their desirable futures and in all development, efforts cannot be over-emphasized.

IGAD is committed to the protection and promotion of the rights of all young people. To this end, the IGAD Youth Policy intends to ensure the youth are centrally positioned in all development strategy setting, development planning and resourcing, programs implementation monitoring evaluation research and knowledge sharing of all policies, laws, programs, and initiatives that affect and or protect the youth in the region.

For the purpose of IGAD Youth Policy, meaningful youth engagement is to be realized through promotion of formal and informal child-led, youth-led and child-and-youth-serving public interest federations, unions, organizations, platforms, associations, councils, networks, movements, mechanisms, structures and other youth-focused and youth-serving entities (hereinafter referred to as "youth entities"), including their members and interested parties and stakeholders in the design, development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, research, learning and knowledge sharing of all sustainable development youth-related policies, laws, programs and institutions at all levels within IGAD and its Member States.

2.3.3 Pillars of Meaningful Youth Engagement

The following nine pillars' outlays core characteristics of "meaningful youth engagement":

Self-Organized: IGAD will ensure that the youth within the region, using their formal and informal organized and legitimate structures, can and will decide the best structures, working styles and engagement strategies that best serves their needs, interests and development aspirations as captured in this Policy.

Legally Mandated (Rights-Based): In the context of the constitutive mandate of IGAD, this pillar implies the imperative to engage youth in all IGAD processes through legally established and operating youth entities, and that all youth engagement with IGAD will be enshrined in the IGAD's Handbook and Rules of Procedure or modalities. In addition, IGAD will mainstream the Youth Policy and actions that make it clear that the "youth" in the conversation have an equal say in all decisions-making processes including but not limited to scope of this policy.

Designated: The IGAD Youth Policy is developed and domiciled within existing IGAD Structures. For effective, qualitative, proactive and sustainable implementation of the policy, IGAD will ensure that the policy is designated to an IGAD Division and that appropriate structures are established and resourced to avoid unnecessary competition with other organs or divisions within IGAD or with Member States' structures and organs. IGAD will create designated seats at the Summit and Secretariat through which the voices of the youth shall blossom and actions championed and executed.

Resourced and Capacitated: The IGAD Youth Policy therefore implores upon all the Member States to tap into the demographic dividend by significantly and sustainably arranging their budgets at national and regional level for the meaningful engagement of the youth as per the context of this policy.

Accountable: The IGAD Youth Policy creates a mechanism for increasing accountability of duty bearers on all matters related to youth development and empowerment strategies formulation including policies, laws, programs, initiatives, campaigns, advocacies and related interventions within the Region.

Inclusive and Non-Discriminative: The IGAD Youth policy ensures that no single segment of youth populace in the IGAD Region is excluded nor discriminated against on any of these basis: age, sex, disability, nationality, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, economic or any other status, but shall instead create favorable conditions for all youth to thrive and attain their optimal self-actualization levels through enhanced opportunities, access to quality and affordable education, access to youth-friendly and responsive health services, access to requisite resources for youth development and empowerment, increased youth voices at all IGAD Levels of operations and enshrine the respect for rights in all IGAD Processes and Procedures.

Gender Equity and Equality: The Policy, in all its pursuits and endeavors strives to guarantee equal enjoyment of rights and privileges by men and women of all socially valued goods and services, socio-economic development and youth empowerment opportunities as well as resources available for these particular policy principles.

Youth Participation and Inclusion: The policy will ensure effective and mutually beneficial youth participation in decision-making processes at IGAD; sports, arts and creative sectors, research, innovation and industrialization processes within IGAD Region; development of the blue and digital economies; climate change mitigation and interventions; job-creation and peace building across the entire IGAD Region. During implementation phase, Member States role is tomay be called upon to consider ways to increase inclusive representation of youth in decision-making at all levels for the prevention and resolution of conflicts, co-create and co-design appropriate socio-economic development programs and projects at Regional and Member State Level and to participate in all processes of public governance and administration with an aim of ensuring greater youth participation and gender equality. All relevant actors should take into account, as appropriate, the participation and views of youth when negotiating and implementing the IGAD Youth Policy and its attendant pieces of legislation and agreements.

Ownership and Sense of Belonging: IGAD Youth Policy recognizes the implications of the concept of "ownership and belonging" as very imperative to the successful development

and future implementation of this policy. Relying on lessons learnt from the Trends in Cognitive Sciences Volume 23 Issue No. 2 of February 2019 (pg. 102 – 113), IGAD affirms that youth ownership of and feelings of belonging to processes and actions aimed at addressing their common issues and challenges matters a lot if the suggested policy actions are to attain their desirable ends (impacts). In the process of translating the policy into laws and subsequently into programs and actions, IGAD will ensure meaningful engagement and effective participation of the youth at all levels to enrich their sense of ownership and belonging throughout policy implementation and review phases.

2.3.4 Strategies for Meaningful Youth Engagement with IGAD and within IGAD Processes

IGAD Youth Policy 2023 has adopted strategies for meaningful youth engagement as derived from the Global Consensus Statement on Meaningful Adolescent and Youth Engagement. The strategies were developed after very extensive research-based deliberations and consultations with and between state and non-state actors, development and research agencies, policymakers, youth civil society organizations and youth-serving CSOs, health practitioners and all others who seek to work with the youth in an inclusive and equitable way in the African Continent.

These strategies are:

i. **Support youth leadership by facilitating opportunities for decision-making in all stages of programs and initiatives:** This includes working with adolescent and youth-led organizations as a core partner, creating and/or supporting youth-centered and youth-focused development policies, laws, programs/projects and interventions. The support is also appropriately important in establishing a youth advisory group or council at different levels of decision-making and governance with a clear structure for influencing the direction of regional youth organization and leadership, youth affairs management and implementation of youth social-development initiatives, and reserving spaces for young people on the planning and decision-making groups and fora. Supporting youth leadership also includes ensuring that these roles are clearly defined and young people are adequately supported in every way to ensure that they can influence decisions, policies, legislations and programs.

ii. **Member States make a solid commitment to discuss and agree upon the roles, responsibilities, and expectations together with young people, preferably in a written agreement**: These discussions should explore the aim, goal, and purpose of engagement with young people to ensure mutual accountability at Member State Level. Before engaging youth at the Country-Level, young people should be involved in determining how their participation will take place, its scope, purpose, and potential impact, and how or what they would like to contribute. After engagement, young people should receive clear feedback on how their participation has influenced outcomes, and given opportunities to participate in follow up processes or activities, including monitoring and evaluation of young people's participation and its overall impact in regional transformation and realization of sustainable development goals and the AU Agenda 2063 among other compelling regional development blueprints.

iii. **Establish a clear method for addressing and responding to feedback from all formal and informal youth engagements:** This includes regular discussion with young people on whether or not their views and ideas are being heard, adopted. Mainstreamed into the Regional development planning instruments including policies, charters, treaties, laws, budgets, programs and projects.

iv. **Create and identify opportunities for young people and support them to advocate for issues and causes of their choice, and to share their experience and knowledge as experts:** by connecting young people with key population networks, mentoring young people to speak at advocacy events, and hiring young people as members of staff within ranks and file of IGAD and IGAD member States.

v. **Support sustained engagement and ongoing relationships between young people's organizations and the IGAD**: This may include providing young people with enough time, space, and other necessary resources for meetings with different IGAD Divisions and Specialized Entities and to multiply their impact and reach within the Region, including before, during, and after major IGAD Youth Conventions and Special events.

vi. **Build skills and knowledge of young people and the adults working with them as a mechanism for fast tracking the realization of IGAD Youth Policy Objectives and Aspirations:** Capacity building in this regard will entail provision of technical and professional support to the youth regarding the development of their policy-oriented programs and projects, country-level policies and laws, and resource mobilization strategies. Youth ability for effective engagement with other stakeholders, decision-makers and development partners is also a requirement for effective IGAD Youth Policy implementation and are therefore considered by IGAD as a necessity.

vii. **IGAD will use language (s) and communication methods that are understandable, respectful, and accessible to everyone** within the region by avoiding overly technical language and jargon, developing material for disabled young people, and providing translation support to those who should require it.

viii. **IGAD will strive to provide young people with sufficient support and resources, including financial, in a timely manner:** This includes giving appropriate priority to funding and officially collaborating with adolescent and youth-led organizations in pursuit of this policy and its objectives. It will also entail heightened transparency and diversity in funding arrangements by allocating funds to young people in an equitable way and ensuring sufficient funds are available to guarantee that participation is truly accessible for a range of young people. Within culturally appropriate boundaries, young people will be compensated for their participation in recognition of their skills, expertise, innovations, and time.

ix. **Provide enabling environments and ensure that adequate time and resources are made available to youth so that they are prepared and have the confidence and opportunity to participate in high-level decision-making:** These approaches should be mindful of the differing levels of support needed, based on the age and evolving capacities of young people, and acknowledge that the expertise and participation of some youth may draw from adverse personal experiences that could trigger emotional trauma that may require the provision of psychological support.

x. **Promote gender equality and the empowerment of girls and young women in all IGAD and IGAD Member States' development policy and legislation planning and budgeting processes**: This includes implementing gender-sensitive measures to facilitate the engagement of girls and young women in participatory governance and socio-economic development activities. By meaningfully engaging women and girls, IGAD will transform gendered social norms by legitimizing their engagement in decision-making arenas at both Regional and National Levels.

SECTION THREE

3.0 PRIORITIZED YOUTH ISSUES AND CORRESPONDING STRATEGIC RESPONSES

3.1 Section Introduction

This section presents a detailed description of issues and challenges affecting youth development and empowerment in the IGAD Region. The issues enlisted in this section were identified and prioritized through inclusive and participatory consultative, input and validation processes.

The processes identified 13 issues as follows:

3.2 Priority No. 1: Legal, Institutional and Programming Framework

The youth in the region face major inclusion and participation barriers in relevant programs, projects, and decision-making structures as well as effective contribution in civic and political processes. The limited participation of educated, unemployed, globally exposed, and technologically savvy youth has led to frustration and a sense of disfranchisement, which, if left unaddressed, may threaten community cohesion, peace, stability and security

3.2.1 Policy Objectives:

To mainstream youth agenda in all IGAD processes and structures.

3.2.2 Strategic Actions

In order to mainstream meaningful youth participation in all IGAD processes, the following actions, at different levels, are proposed as follows: -

a. IGAD Member States

Member States role is to:

i. Domesticate mechanisms for the implementation of UN Resolution 2250 on Peace and Security and its recommendations.

ii. Establish National Youth Councils (NYCs), Agencies or their equivalents where they do not exist and guarantee their meaningful engagement and participation in the context of the IGAD Youth Policy Framework.

iii. Facilitate the creation or strengthening of platforms for youth participation in decision-making at local, national, regional, and continental levels of governance.

iv. Give priority to policies and Programmes including youth advocacy and peer-to-peer Programmes for marginalized youth.

v. Provide inclusive access to information in diverse formats including ICT (Print and Electronic), sign language, braille and such other formats such that the youth become aware of their rights and opportunities to participate in decision making and civic life.

vi. Provide technical and financial support to build the institutional capacity of youth organizations.

vii. Include youth representatives as part of delegations to national, regional and international meetings.

viii. Promote effective youth participation in all IGAD processes through well-established national and regional coordination mechanism.

ix. Encourage best practice replication among member states such as establishment of National Youth Service Schemes to bolster regional peace building efforts, regional integration and development.

x. Put in place mechanisms to facilitate coordination and networking amongst youth and youth serving organizations both at the regional and international level.

b. IGAD Secretariat

The IGAD Secretariat role is to:

i. Institutionalize mechanisms and action plan for the implementation of UN Resolution 2250 on Peace and Security and its recommendations.

ii. Assist member states in formulating regional programmes/projects in the priority areas enlisted in the IGAD Youth Policy (2023).

iii. Facilitate the coordination and harmonization of regional development policies and programmes to ensure effective and functional mainstreaming of the IGAD Youth Policy priorities in the IGAD member states' development plans and budget frameworks.

iv. Mobilize resources to support policy implementation including financing of regional development programmes/projects emanating from the IGAD Youth Policy interpretation and application in the quest for Regional Youth Development and Empowerment.

v. Reinforce Regional and National infrastructures necessary for successful implementation of regional youth development projects and programmes within the provisions of the IGAD Youth Policy.

vi. Put in place mechanisms to facilitate coordination and networking amongst youth and youth serving organizations at the national, regional and international level.

vii. Institute deliberate efforts to establish linkages between the IGAD youth and youth organizations with continental and global organizations with similar objectives.

viii. Promote the role of youth in culture, sports and creative industries within the region.

ix. Work through member states and other relevant actors and stakeholders to ensure effective and impactful policy implementation; policy oversighting at national and regional levels; and policy monitoring, evaluation, research and development, learning and knowledge management; and,

x. Establish an annual IGAD Youth Forum, hosted by the Executive Secretary, as a regional platform for youth engagement with the IGAD leadership.

c. Youth, Youth-Focused and Youth-Led Organizations

Youth, youth-focused and youth-led organizations role is to:

i. Take an active role in the sensitization and awareness creation on the IGAD youth policy.

ii. Mobilize requisite resources necessary for effective implementation of the policy.

iii. Take active roles in the implementation of IGAD youth policy in the best interest of the youth at regional and sub-regional levels.

iv. Work with and through national and regional stakeholders to ensure, the policy is cascaded and implemented in all levels.

v. Promote knowledge sharing and best practice learning.

vi. Participate in monitoring, evaluation, research and learning.

d. Development Partners

Development Partners role is to:

i. Provide technical assistance in the implementation of the policy.

ii. Contribute financial support for implementation of the policy at the regional and sub-regional levels.

iii. Work with implementing partners to track policy impact and contribution to the realization of the sustainable development goals and indicators.

iv. Participate in the regional and sub-regional meetings convened for the purpose of review the progress implementation.

v. Support monitoring, evaluation, research and learning related to the policy implementation.

vi. Work with key stakeholders to facilitate policy dissemination, awareness creation, and capacity building activities for effective implementation of the policy.

e. Role of the Media

i. Popularize the policy through hosting the IGAD representatives to discuss the policy in various media houses.

ii. Track and report the policy implementation in all spheres and by all Member State and non-state actors.

iii. Support policy advocacy programmes at national, regional, continental and global level.

iv. Champion the youth agenda as a way to promoting youth issues awareness and ongoing actions to address the same.

3.3 Priority Area No. 2: Youth Peace and Security

3.3.1 Policy Objective

To ensure meaningful youth participation in promoting good governance, peace and security for stability, regional integration, and development in the IGAD Region.

3.3.2 Strategic Actions

a. UN Security Council and UN Mechanisms for Peace and Security in the IGAD Region

The UNSC and UN Mechanisms for Peace and Security should hold the following roles

i. Support IGAD AND THE Member States to adopt and develop mechanisms for implementation of the UN Resolution 2250 on Peace and Security and its recommendations.

ii. Encourage and support meaningful youth participation in regional peace and security efforts, including as relevant with respective UN Mission Mandates within the IGAD Region.

iii. Systematically engage with diverse groups of young people and representatives of youth organizations during country visits that the Council undertakes.

iv. Expand and systematize UN Mechanisms' support to IGAD Youth Policy Implementation concerning the IGAD's role in promoting meaningful youth participation in promotion of Regional Peace and Security.

v. Ensure the integration of youth and peace and security agenda into the UN's strategic and planning documents, IGAD Regional Peace and Security Status analysis, IGAD-led youth and peace and security efforts and

actions and support IGAD Youth Council in developing Conflict Prevention and Resolution tools at the Regional and Member States' levels.

vi. Support IGAD to establish a network of youth and peace and security focal points at the Country and Regional levels and build on existing human and technical resources within IGAD and IGAD Member States to ensure dedicated capacities with regard to youth and peace and security within IGAD Region.

vii. Build IGAD's capacities to protect children and young people from recruitment into terrorism, violent extremism, militia and armed groups.

viii. Sanction illicit cross-border trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances as addressed in the 1961 UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the 1971 UN Convention of Psychotropic Substances, 1988 UN Convention on Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

b. Role of IGAD Secretariat

i. Operationalize the IGAD Youth Forum for Peace, and amplify the youth voice in promoting peace and security in the region.

ii. Conduct capacity building on conflict prevention, management and resolution for youth leaders of the member states.

iii. Promote regional experience sharing platform.

iv. Ensure the protection of civilians, including young women and men, in particular young human rights defenders and peacebuilders, during and after armed conflicts.

v. Ensure that all IGAD Policy Organs set up for the purposes of implementing the IGAD Youth Policy provisions on Youth Peace and Security feeds into Meetings of the Council of Ministers in charge of Regional Affairs, Security and Foreign Affairs; and subsequently to Summits by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

c. IGAD Member States role

i. Strengthen the capacity of youth and youth organizations in peace building, conflict prevention, management and resolution through the promotion of intercultural learning, civic education, tolerance, human rights education, good governance, democracy, mutual respect for cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, the importance of dialogue and cooperation, responsibility, solidarity and international cooperation.

ii. Institute mechanisms to promote a culture of peace and tolerance amongst youth that discourages participation in acts of transnational security threats and organized crimes; violence, terrorism, violent extremism, xenophobia, racial discrimination, gender-based discrimination, foreign occupation and trafficking in arms and drugs;

iii. Mobilize youth for the reconstruction of areas devastated by war, bringing help to refugees and war victims and promoting peace, reconciliation and rehabilitation activities;

iv. Develop dedicated local, national and regional roadmaps for meaningful youth engagement and participation in peace and security;

v. Enhance meaningful participation of young women and men in peace and security processes and throughout negotiations of peace agreements.

vi. Increase funding for the implementation of IGAD Regional Peace and Security Agenda, including accessible resourcing for organizations led by and focused on young people within the Region.

vii. Take specific actions and elaborate measures to ensure the protection of civilians, including young women and men, in particular young human rights defenders and peacebuilders, during and after armed conflicts.

d. Bi-Lateral and Multi-Lateral Development Partners role

i. collaborate with IGAD, IGAD Member States and IGAD Youth Forum to

ii. Facilitate the transition of FCAS from fragility to resilience and from conflict to peace.

iii. Develop and roll-out methodologies to support the humanitarian-development-peace-resilience nexus targeting youth as core actors and beneficiaries.

iv. Support the implementation of IGAD guidelines, policies, action plans and tools for conflict early warning, conflict prevention, conflict sensitivity analysis, resilience and peace building.

v. Conduct joint studies and resilience analysis to enable active, functional and balanced youth engagement in fragile and conflict situations in the IGAD Region.

vi. Support the establishment of Center of Expertise for Cooperation on Resilience, Peace and Security Programs for Women, Youth and Children in the IGAD Region.

vii. Provide expertise and technical backstopping for cooperation on efficient Youth Engagement in Peace and Security Processes including negotiations of and actions on Ceasefires and Peace Agreements (CPAs); Security Sector Reforms (SSR); arms control, anti-money laundering (AML); and countering the financing of terrorism (CFT), Disarmament-Demobilization-Reintegration (DDR); Mine actions and explosives; and Small Arms Light Weapons (SALW) in the IGAD Region.

viii. Provide financial, expertise and capacity building to strength youth organizations' capacities for effective engagement and participation in peace and security processes.

ix. Support IGAD to implement youth social and Economic Development Priorities enlisted in this Policy in a green and human rights friendly manner as a means to achieving sustainable peace and security in the IGAD Region.

x. Liaise with the Office of the Executive Secretary of IGAD to organize and host the annual IGAD Youth Forum as a platform for reviewing impacts of Meaningful Youth Engagement in Regional Peace and Security Processes and to use the outcomes of such forums to strengthen the gains made while deepening factors propelling resilience, peace, security and sustainable regional development.

3.4 Priority Area No. 3: Youth, Environment and Climate Change

3.4.1 The Policy Objective

To ensure youth participation in the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, research and learning of national and regional development plans, policies and strategies in environment protection and climate action.

3.4.2 Strategic Actions

a. IGAD Secretariat and IGAD Member States role:

i. Ensure that all IGAD Policy Organs set up for the purposes of implementing the IGAD Youth Policy provisions on Youth, Environment and Climate Change feeds into Meetings of the Council of Ministers in charge of Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change, and subsequently to Summits by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

ii. Initiate a green and blue economy financing, including increasing inflows, grant efficiency and impact of funding on youth and other more vulnerable groups in the communities.

iii. Support renewable and clean energy, energy efficiency and national Just Transition Programmes.

iv. Promote domestic Nature-Based Solutions and focus on biodiversity through work on youth-led and youth-CSO driven sustainable land and environment management, forestry, oceans and large water bodies conservations as well as eco and agro-tourism.

v. Build resilient agriculture by focusing on inclusive economic development, green collar, blue collar and orange collar jobs while reducing over-reliance on white collar jobs and jobs that generally contribute to land and environmental degradation.

vi. In collaboration with Development Partners and Specialized Agencies, support Member States to develop and sustain their green and resilient symbiotic cities, including a focus on water (flooding and water resources and drought management) and enhancing information, communication and technology application in urban planning and management.

vii. Adopt path-ways towards Transformative Climate-Resilient Development.

viii. Enhance and facilitate the means towards implementation of climate-smart, climate-resilient and climate-sensitive agricultural and infrastructural development including design and implementation of Regional Climate Finance Mechanisms.

ix. Promote enhanced youth-centered climate policies, actions and strategies that ensures and advances the principles of inclusivity, equity, polluter pays, multi-sectoral and multi-level approach, and participatory climate governance and institutional coordination.

3.5 Priority Area No. 4: Youth Migration and Forced Displacement

3.5.1 Policy Objective

To establish mechanisms that promote and establish safe, orderly and regular migration including management and prevention of forced displacement (reduction of drivers), promotion of resilience and durable solutions of youth within and from the IGAD Region.

3.5.2 Strategic Actions

In order to successfully cascade and effectively implement the IGAD RMPF in the best interest of young women and men in the Region;

a. The IGAD Secretariat role:

i. Develop youth-focused strategies for poverty reduction, job creation, enterprise development, industrialization through increased value addition in agriculture, improved lifestyles and working conditions while developing skills sets that would best address the root causes of irregular migration and displacement in and from the IGAD Region.

ii. Promote the signing, ratification and domestication by IGAD Member States of all International Instruments (Treaties, Protocols, Agreements, Charters and Conventions) relating to Migration and Forced Displacement

including the IGAD RMPF and its enabling programs and projects intended at strengthening youth participation in the same.

iii. Fast-track adoption and implementation of appropriate protocols intended to progressively achieve meaningful youth engagement and participation in the design and implementation of Regional Free Movement of Persons Protocols, Right of Residence and the Right of Establishment including access by the young women and men to gainful, decent and legal employment without adversely affecting the employment of local nationals in countries of destination.

iv. Include youth migration and displacement in the framework of IGAD Regional Development Planning, Project/Programme Planning Design and Implementation; Resource Mobilization and Allocation; Policy and Programme Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, Learning and Knowledge Management in order to deepen response to root causes of irregular migration and displacement in the Region.

v. Formulate viable and pragmatic policies and programs for environmental protection and conservation, management of human and wildlife conflicts, drought mitigation and early warning and response, flood mitigation and early warning and response and pandemics outbreaks mitigation and early warning and response as some of the major causes of irregular migration and displacement in the IGAD Region.

vi. Promote the establishment, consolidation and deepening of democracy in all the IGAD Member States based on transparent, regular and participatory democratic processes, respect for and observance of human rights and the rule of law and to support pan-African institutions and initiatives reflecting these objectives and principles including promoting the implementation of the Strategic Framework for A NEPAD Youth Programme (2005 – 2015) within IGAD as a complementary follow-on program.

vii. Support national programmes for disarmaments, demobilization, detoxification and reintegration of former and demobilized combatants with particular attention to the predicament of child soldiers, abandoned spouses and others who were denied care and support during and immediately after armed and or violent conflicts.

viii. Support sustainable and meaningful engagement of young women and men in all facets of conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding processes by facilitating active youth participation in peace negotiations and other regional diplomatic initiatives.

ix. Urge and support IGAD Member States to domesticate IGAD Youth Policy Actions on Youth Migration and Forced Displacement at National Level by supporting the formulation of appropriate NMPFs within each of the IGAD Member States where such policies do not already exist.

x. Engage IGAD Development Partners (UNEP, UNHABITAT, UNHCR, OCHA, UNDP, UNFPA, SIDA, WB, GIZ, JICA, DFID, USAID, IOM, Save the Children International, World Vision among other) to provide requisite technical, financial, and other assistance which enable a holistic approach to management of migration and forced displacement which instituting viable prevention and control measures thereto.

xi. Encourage and promote adaptation and implementation of RMPF and NMPFs at the local levels by both State and Non-State Actors/Public and Private Sectors to ensure optimization of policy and program impacts on targeted region(s) and nation(s).

xii. Encourage youth participation in the formulation, development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, research on and learning from IGAD Youth Policy on Migration and Displacement with an aim of improving policy, programs and institutional frameworks at National and Regional Levels.

xiii. Ensure that all IGAD Policy Organs set up for the purposes of implementing the IGAD Youth Policy provisions on Youth Migration and Forced Displacement feeds into Meetings of the Council of Ministers in charge of Foreign Affairs, Internal Security and Defense and subsequently to Summits by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

xiv. Promote dialogue between IGAD member states and Member States and destination countries for labour migrants to ensure employment, social protection and fair recruitment for young people through bilateral labour agreements and capacity building of labour attaches and embassies of IGAD member states in key countries

b. IGAD Member States role:

i. Strengthen national laws, policies, structures to establish and sustain an effective inter- and intra- agency coordination and integrated approaches at national level through among others, incorporating and harmonizing the IGAD Youth Policy provisions on Migration and Forced Displacement into national policies, legislation, programs, projects and budgetary allocations.

ii. Adopt and domesticate all international instruments on migration and displacement including instruments that sanction human trafficking in all forms and manner.

iii. Institute policy and legislative actions on forced labor, protection of children and young women and men from involvement and participation in armed and or violent conflicts.

iv. Create standards, procedures, guidelines and protocols based on reliable data, law and policy, for all youth returnees, re-admission and re-integration of returned youth immigrants consistent with existing regional, continental and international instruments pertaining to management of migration and displacement.

v. Provide returned migrants with appropriate identity documents to permit their due recognition and acceptance, as well as facilitate full participation in public, social and economic affairs in IGAD and in its individual member states in the same way as nationals who had not migrated.

vi. Develop and institutionalize mechanism for continuous monitoring and reporting on the situation of refugees and or returnees within IGAD Member States with an aim to ensuring that their welfare and well-being is guaranteed and provided and that they are able to effectively contribute to national and regional social and economic development regardless of their refugee status.

vii. Strengthen national border management and control capacities through enhanced capacity-building measures, collaborations, intelligence sharing, surveillance and technical co-operation to ensure orderly and purposeful migration into and out of the IGAD Region.

viii. Work with specialized Agencies such as IOM, UNHCR, ILO, and Interpol to have orderly, secure, voluntary and risk-free return, re-admission and re-integration of returned or returning youth migrants.

ix. Establish focal points within relevant Ministries and devise national contingency plans for enhancing youth and youth organizations'

capacities to address root causes and impacts of migration and displacement, while developing and implementing programs and projects aimed at mitigating these root causes and impacts of irregular migration and displacement on young women and men.

x. Facilitate discussions of free movement of labor within the IGAD Region.

xi. Coordinate engagements with the Regional Economic Communities to fast track the implementation of the various protocols that support free movement of labor.

xii. Ensure security and protection of children and youth in line with the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) to ensure safe and regular mobility for the youth

xiii. Outline cross-border policies that protect and safeguard young people.

c. Development Partners role

In order to better deal with the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement of young women and men (including children) in the IGAD Region, development partners shall support programs and actions intended at: -

i. Fostering resilience, stability, and security within the IGAD Region.

ii. Helping IGAD and IGAD Member States to create socioeconomic and job opportunities for young people.

iii. Building regional and national legislative, institutional, and operational capacities to improve overall migration governance, management and outcomes.

d. Youth and Youth Organizations' role

IGAD and Youth Organizations shall collaborate on broad variety of Regional Migration and Forced Displacement Management issues including but not limited to:

i. Cooperate in awareness-raising among potential migrants and capacity building for governmental and non-governmental organizations and institutions in counter-trafficking, provision of safe shelter and protection services, counseling and guidance services, provision of medical services to migrants on transit and in refugee camps as well as assist in facilitating return and reintegration.

ii. Collaborate with specialized migration and displacement management agencies in each of the three stages of assisted voluntary returns: pre-departure, transportation and post-arrival with an aim to ensure safety and security of all returnees from countries of origin to their host countries.

iii. Participate in Calls for Proposals, Grants Applications and other donor-driven interventions as shall from time to time be floated for the purposes of implementation of the Policy.

3.6 Priority Area No. 5: Youth Education and Skills Development

3.6.1 Policy Objective

To establish and strengthen technical and finance mechanisms that support inclusive, cohesive and skills-oriented training for sustainable development in the region.

3.6.2 Strategic Actions

a. IGAD Member States role:

In order to ensure accessible, equitable, relevant, inclusive and quality education in all the **IGAD Member States commit to**

i. Develop a roadmap for the elaboration of a regional qualifications framework (RQF).

ii. Develop a Costed National Education Response Plans (CNERP).

iii. Implement appropriate career guidance for the youth.

iv. Develop and implement apprenticeship programs for the youth to facilitate school to work transition.

v. Promote entrepreneurship training in school curriculum in all levels of education.

vi. Adopt policies that promote and support innovative ideas in readiness for the fourth industrial revolution.

b. IGAD Secretariat role:

i. Ensure effective and practical implementation of the Djibouti Declaration with emphasis on the need for developing and implementing: (a) regional education quality standards; (b) regional skills development for refugees; (c) Inclusion of refugees into national education systems: (d) accreditation and certification of education programs and (e) financing, partnership and monitoring in support of refugee education.

ii. Fast track the adoption and implementation of the IGAD Regional Qualification Framework at Member State's and Regional Level by providing Member States with the much-needed support to build and strengthen mechanisms to recognize and assess equivalency of educational standards/qualifications at national, regional and international levels.

iii. Establish and operationalize regional teacher training program

iv. Establish and operationalize the IGAD Council of Higher Education with an advisory Board.

v. Launch and scale-up, through local and international resource mobilization and partnerships, a regional scholarship program to provide inclusive access to higher education among refugees, returnees and host communities.

vi. Establish scholarship schemes for the youth to access higher learning in her member states.

vii. Support the harmonization and recognition of professional training and certifications among member states.

viii. Establish a regional innovation hub/center of excellence that supports innovation and technological advancement.

ix. Organize an annual award for the youth in innovation and award the best innovators within the IGAD Region or member states.

x. Ensure that all IGAD Policy Organs set up for the purposes of implementing the IGAD Youth Policy provisions on Youth Education and Skills Development feeds into Meetings of the Council of Ministers in charge Basic Education, TVET and Higher Learning and subsequently to Summits by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

3.7 Priority Area No. 6: Youth in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI)

3.7.1 The Policy Objective

To support the creation of an enabling environment that promotes science, technology and innovation (STI) within the IGAD Region.

3.7.2 Strategic Actions

The implementation and strategic priority areas of this policy is founded on the age-old history of scientific discovery and technological innovation that characterizes the IGAD Region. The policy will build on the present momentum to ensure that Africa's rich indigenous knowledge systems and practices are applied as stepping-stones into the gigantic Africa's ICT potential while continuously generating and applying modern and appropriately needs-oriented ICT solutions to solve our persistent socio-economic problems and to increase wealth through SMART Job Creation in the ICT sector.

a. The IGAD Secretariat role

i. Establish and strengthen Regional Centers of Excellence in Science, Technology and Innovation.

ii. Promote indigenous knowledge and best practices, and scale-up proven indigenous technologies to commercial level from patenting and application of Regional Copyright Laws and Patenting Regulations.

iii. Establish an IGAD Regional Intellectual Property Rights Agency (RIPRA) to protect and promote the rights of young innovators and scientists engaged in creative/innovative undertakings, both within IGAD Region and overseas, provided they are IGAD Citizens by virtue of the application of the Rule of Origin principles.

iv. Strengthen regional and international cooperation in science, technology and innovation including in research on indigenous knowledge on STI.

v. Establish a regional fund for STI targeting youth aged between 15 and 35 to support engagement in research, innovation and dissemination of findings including commercialization of innovations from within the IGAD Region.

vi. Establish a Regional STI Database and Knowledge Management/Transfer System that enables effective STI exchange within and among IGAD Member States.

vii. Implement IGAD Regional Qualifications Framework and the relevant provisions pertaining to TVET.

viii. Establish regional centers of excellence in TVET and STI and link them with STI Innovation Hubs and Incubators at the Regional and Member State Levels.

ix. Ensure that all IGAD Policy Organs set up for the purposes of implementing the IGAD Youth Policy provisions on Youth in Science, Technology and Innovation feeds into Meetings of the Council of Ministers in charge of Science, Technology and Innovation or equivalent Ministries and subsequently to Summits by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

b. IGAD Member States role:

i. Increase investment in science, technology and innovation with emphasis on research and innovation/discoveries in the IGAD Region.

ii. Provide enabling policy, legal, budgetary and program implementation frameworks and incentives for technology generation and dissemination.

iii. Enhance the role of ICT in improving learning and training outcomes, promoting innovation and developing techno-preneurship skills among the youth within each of the IGAD Member States.

iv. Develop and implement scholarship, fellowship and other motivation programs and schemes aimed at supporting talented scholars and researchers in STI.

c. TVETs and Higher Learning/Research Institutions' role:

i. Ensure the quality of TVET and High Education STI Programmes are industry and labor market-oriented and capable of addressing and solving local social-economic development challenges.

ii. Determine the levels and profiles of applicable STI TVET programs.

iii. Conduct regular training and learning needs assessment to identify skills sets required in industry and labor market.

iv. Establish inter- and intra-institutions' platforms for sharing knowledge, experience, skills, innovation and best practices in STI teaching, learning and training.

v. Adopt policies and strategies that promote STI profitability and mobility.

3.8. Priority Area No. 7: Youth and Agriculture

3.8.1 Policy Objective

To ensure youth participation in the design, implementation, monitoring, research, learning and evaluation of agricultural development plans, policies, programs and strategies at the national and regional levels.

3.8.2 Strategic Actions

In order to deepen, strengthen and sustain meaningful youth engagement in agriculture.

a. The IGAD Secretariat role:

i. Support member states in co-designing and co-development of youth-focused agricultural development frameworks that support expansion of Regional Economic opportunities, wealth creation, poverty alleviation, food and nutrition security and shared prosperity.

ii. In collaboration with bi-lateral and multilateral development partners, establish a special fund for Youth in Agriculture to enable the youth to contribute towards the implementation of CAADP and other Regional Agricultural Programs aimed at improving agricultural production and productivity, value addition and increased trade in agricultural commodities at the national, regional and international levels.

iii. Facilitate intra-Regional Trade and Value Chain Development inclusive of young women and men.

iv. Launch and implement IGAD Youth Agricultural Exchange and Fellowship Programs designed around specific outcome areas of CAADP and with intention of improving access to knowledge, information, emerging agricultural technologies and innovations.

v. Increase Regional resilience to impacts of Climate Change on Agriculture through improved early warning systems and risk management in the agriculture sector.

vi. Promote Regional Research and Development in Agriculture through improved regional capacity to generate, analyze and use empirical data, information, knowledge, inventions/innovations and other research findings to boost regional agricultural production and productivity.

vii. In collaboration with all relevant regional stakeholders, improve management of natural resources for sustainable agriculture to thrive.

viii. Ensure that all IGAD Policy Organs set up for the purposes of implementing the IGAD Youth Policy provisions on youth and agriculture feeds into Meetings of the Council of Ministers in charge of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries and subsequently to Summits by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

b. The IGAD Member States role:

i. Ensure meaningful engagement and participation of the youth in the design, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of National Comprehensive Agriculture Development Program (NCADP) for the Youth.

ii. Support the establishment, development and strengthening of Youth CSOs to be effective and accountable institutions with requisite capacities to implement agricultural policies and programs while remaining true to their vision and mission statements.

iii. Support their youth to participate in the IGAD Youth Agricultural Exchange and Fellowship Programs.

iv. Strengthen capacity for evidence-based planning, policy implementation and review and grant management for both state and non-state youth-focused institutions and programs.

v. Improve multi-sectoral coordination, partnerships and mutual accountability in all sectors related to agriculture and youth participation.

vi. Increase public-private investment in youth-related agricultural projects/programs.

vii. Increase capacity, at national and sub-national levels, for data generation, collation, analysis, interpretation and application in policy formulation, program planning and implementation as well as for purposes of resource mobilization and allocation to youth-driven agricultural transformation in the IGAD Region.

c. Youth and Youth CSOs role

i. Actively participate in the design, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of National Comprehensive Agriculture Development Program (NCADP) in their respective countries.

ii. Acquire and utilize skills, knowledge and expertise in agricultural value chain development, agro-processing, sales and marketing and agricultural produce and other commodities and

iii. Support the establishment, development and strengthening of Youth CSOs where they do not exist to be effective and accountable institutions with requisite capacities to implement agricultural policies and programs while remaining true to their vision and mission statements.

iv. Participate in call for proposals by IGAD or its development partners aimed at supporting IGAD Youth Policy Priority Area No. 7.

v. Regularly examine and align national and sub-national agricultural goals, targets and related performance indicators in NCADP with those in the CAADP Results Framework (2015 – 2025)

vi. Promote multi-sectoral coordination, partnerships and mutual accountability in all sectors related to agriculture and youth participation.

vii. Rally unity of purpose among Regional Youth CSOs around a common national and regional youth engagement in and benefit from Regional Agricultural Development Programs (RADPs).

viii. Examine, refine, strengthen and align youth agricultural development projects/programs using lessons learnt and experiences gained from Youth Agricultural Exchange and Fellowship Programs to be promoted from time to time by IGAD and its Member States.

ix. Research and publish research articles in peer-reviewed journals to help build the body of knowledge and best practices in Youth and Agriculture in the IGAD Region.

d. Role of Agricultural Research Institutions:

i. Heighten agricultural knowledge and technology to make agriculture increasingly attractive to the youth in the digital age.

ii. Provide a platform and space for research scientists in agriculture to develop and share best youth-led agriculture practice and leadership that have the potential to engender inclusive agricultural growth and development, economic growth, benefit smallholder farmers, and boost food and nutrition security and end hunger across IGAD Region.

iii. Create pro-poor agricultural technologies.

iv. Facilitate knowledge exchange processes on agricultural production systems, market intelligence and consumption trends.

v. Establish partnership between research-centric and non-research-centric agricultural development institutions and organizations.

vi. Improve linkages between research and program design and implementation with youth at the center of planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, research, learning and documentation of lessons and experiences.

vii. Generate empirical evidence that demonstrate the efficacy of proposed and or ongoing youth-focused agricultural development programs and projects and whether such interventions or proposed approaches have the potential and capacity to meet the present and future food and nutrition security needs of the IGAD Region while fostering Regional Resilience, with the goal of guiding policy decisions at the regional and national levels.

3.9 Priority Area No. 8: Youth, Sustainable Livelihoods and Co-Generation of Decent Work

3.9.1 Policy Objective

To provide a conducive environment for youth to access opportunities for sustainable livelihoods and decent work.

3.9.2 Strategic Actions

In order to address challenges related to youth access to and participation in sustainable livelihood and decent work opportunities, including but not limited to: -labor market, free movement, access to services (business incubation and development, financial services, access to markets, skills development, business-start-up support services, health and industrial internship and related services), rights (to association, work, justice, innovation, and free-will), and refugee and host community relations to ensure basic rights, protection of the youth from exploitative and demeaning works, and enhancing youth participation in co-design and co-creation of sustainable livelihoods and decent work

opportunities, the following actions are proposed for implementation by specific policy stakeholders:

a. Role of IGAD Secretariat:

i. Develop and ensure full implementation of Policy and Legislative Framework for Youth Livelihoods, Self-Reliance and Decent Work in line with the Kampala Declaration and Plan of Action on Jobs, Livelihoods and Self-Reliance for Refugees, Returnees and Host Communities in the IGAD Region (June 2020) and the Djibouti Declaration on Labor, Employment and Labor Migration in the IGAD Region. In particular, IGAD shall work with member states to: -

a) Review and amend of national policies and legislations with regard to expanding access to work, simplify procedures for accessing employment (including work permits, formal employment, right to work), self-employment and business opportunities, and improving labor integration through better recognition of TVET and tertiary college diplomas and certificates as well as the right of association including joining trade unions and organized labor formations.

b) Review and amend national policies and legislations with regard to access to rights, equal opportunities and treatment in accordance with national laws, namely in the areas of: simplified asylum process; free movement of refugees to exercise the aspirations of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons in IGAD Region; access to justice; as well as financial services and financial inclusion; education; health; documentation (identification – IDs/passports, birth certificates, permits, property, certification, skills).

c) Further review progress, bottlenecks, capacity of institutions on the policy and legislations implementations and put remedial measures and actions to maximize quick, efficient and free processes for refugees, returnees and host communities.

d) Review/develop and adopt new commitments to policy and legislative change that could help improve the economic contribution that youth in the IGAD Region make in their respective countries and host communities.

e) Acquire policy and practice measures that facilitate access to markets for youth products including patents and copyrights and underlying value chains in the agricultural sector activities undertaken by the youth.

f) Facilitate competitive negotiation of fair value for youth products, talents, skills, knowledge and expertise in the Regional Market.

g) Review and amend national policies, legislations, local development plans, budgets and resource mobilization strategies to incorporate sectoral youth needs and priorities as enlisted in this Policy.

h) Review and amend national policies, legislations, local development plans, budgets and resource mobilization strategies that provide access to quality, needs-based training and skills development programs, entrepreneurship opportunities, small- and medium-enterprise development opportunities for the youth including but not limited to internally displaced youth, nomadic youth, youth refugees, returnees and host communities to promote and ensure viable livelihoods and self-reliance.

ii. Develop protocols to enable increased private sector access into refugee hosting areas through financing, provision of guarantees, Public Private-

Partnership (PPP), blended finance, stronger diaspora involvement and diaspora investment flow, business development services support to private sector to address the infrastructural challenges that limit access to financial services by the youth refugees, returnees and host communities.

iii. Conduct regular forums to bring together youth entrepreneurs, private sector, international development partners, youth civil society organizations, social partners, refugee representatives and policy makers to identify areas of action, challenges and opportunities of private sector engagement in youth's sustainable livelihoods and decent work opportunities development through social dialogue and special investment mechanisms and vehicles that promote youth-led economic development initiatives.

iv. Strengthen linkages between International Finance Institutions (IFIs), Local Financial Institutions (LFIs), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the private sector, development actors (locally and internationally), and policy makers, to capitalize on existing good practices and to promote innovative approaches to financial inclusion in displacement settings, conflict situations, and post conflict recovery processes.

v. Increase regional market opportunities and networks for local goods and services produced by youth entrepreneurs and innovators that support IGAD Member States' participation in annual Youth Enterprises and Innovation Trade Expos to enhance visibility and markets of their goods and products in partnership with UNHCR, IOM, UNIDO, UNDP, World Bank, EU, UKAID, Horn of Africa Youth Network, Save the Children International among other critical partners in youth socio-economic development and empowerment in the IGAD Region.

vi. Attain market-based approaches in supporting governments with investments in infrastructure needed to increase market access for produce and products by refugees and host communities.

vii. Ensure that all IGAD Policy Organs set up for the purposes of implementing the IGAD Youth Policy provisions on Sustainable Livelihoods and Decent Work feeds into Meetings of the Council of Ministers in charge of Labor and Social Services and subsequently to Summits by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

b. Member States role:

i. Create youth-focused project and business financing and technical assistance mechanisms aimed at facilitating and scaling up best practices in sustainable youth livelihoods and decent work co-creation, co-generation and implementation processes.

ii. Establish special economic zones (SEZs), industrial parks, business incubation centers, and export processing zones (EPZ) that majorly focus on youth products and services.

iii. Create special research and innovation fund for sustainable livelihoods and job creation studies and dissemination of study findings among the youth within the IGAD Member States

iv. Develop and implement policies, legislations and programs targeting promotion, protection and perfection of youth creative and innovative talents.

v. Create wage employment that matches both the skills and the aspirations of youth devoid of any form of discrimination, including issues such as family unity, access to education for their children and gender norms.

vi. Establish decent work practices and principles for youth refugees, transformed youth militias, youth in the diaspora, youth in hostile and violent communities, youth in danger of armed conflicts, youth in volatile and fragile regions, semi-illiterate and illiterate youth, host communities to improve safety, job stability, and other working conditions both in formal and informal sector in partnership with ILO.

vii. Maximize collaboration between humanitarian and development actors to advance refugee labor market integration efforts in waged employment.

c. Research Institutions:

The research institutions are called upon to:

viii. Research on the economic impacts of their investment programs to document the positive role of the youth to local economies in the IGAD Region.

ix. Assess the roles of humanitarian and development partners to identify areas of intervention by the private sector in emergencies including protracted and development settings.

x. Undertake socio-economic analysis of all existing sustainable livelihoods and decent work initiatives in the IGAD Region including to provide critical empirical data and information necessary for aiding the development of economically viable approaches, determination of consumer market trends and market assessments in the IGAD Region.

xi. Investigate and determine IGAD Region's natural resource base; status of access to land by the youth; skills sets possessed by or lacking among the youth, recognitions of qualifications and certifications as well as lifelong learning programs; access to training and TVET; access to decent work; access to education and training opportunities; healthcare and social protection; financial services (grants, loans and credit facilities) and markets in order to support demand driven responses by relevant stakeholders in aid of escalation of youth-friendly livelihood development opportunities in the Region.

xii. Conduct a study identifying levels of infrastructure development including markets, roads, mobile and internet connectivity, cottage and micro-industrial parks, special economic zones, export processing zones etc., needed to enable increased private sector and youth engagement in profitable and productive economies within the IGAD Region and make viable recommendation to enable informed policy and legislation decisions.

d. Role of Youth CSOs and Development Support Organizations

i. Provide youth with opportunities to master core literacy and numeracy skills, basic employability and life skills, and vocational skills. They can be designed as a second chance pathway to a primary or secondary school degree, an opportunity to gain the skills needed to return to formal education, or a vehicle to acquire the skills needed to get a job or start a business.

ii. Build upon the existing knowledge and experience of participating youth and relate these to the predominant household livelihood strategies for effective programming and project implementation purposes.

iii. Allow participants to make educational gains or earn achievement certifications in manageable blocks, offering flexibility (e.g., in pacing classes and allowing students/learners/trainees to easily enter and leave

teaching/learning programs) to youth and their families who must often defer or interrupt educational pursuits to address day-to-day survival needs.

iv. Have schedules and locations that are compatible with the participants' livelihood and family demands and security concerns.

v. Enable even the most marginalized (illiterate or semi-literate) groups to participate.

vi. Recover some costs, if feasible, via user fees, which encourage program staff and their sponsors to continually maintain and improve program quality, while reminding participants and their households that they should invest their scarce resources only in programs that are beneficial.

3.10 Priority Area No. 9: Youth and Regional Economic Integration

3.10.1 Policy Objective

To enhance meaningful youth involvement and contribution to the regional economic integration processes and goals.

3.10.2 Strategic Actions

To facilitate youth engagement and participation in the realization of Regional Economic Integration.

a. Role of IGAD Secretariat:

i. Create an open and unified regional economic space to boost intra-IGAD trade by creating enabling environment and removing barriers and obstacles for trade in goods and services, especially those that are produced and supplied by the youth and youth-led enterprises in the IGAD Region.

ii. Create coherence and harmony among national trade and enterprise policies of IGAD Member States.

iii. Help IGAD Member States implement their obligations arising from the ratification and adoption of IGAD Youth Policy priority on youth and regional economic integration and other IGAD Regional Trade Agreements, in particular AfCFTA.

iv. Create an enabling and supportive environment for direct foreign investments and heightened domestic investments so as to create more decent work opportunities for the youth in the IGAD Region.

v. Institute Mechanisms and Facilities that facilitate Regional Trade, Investment and Tourism development.

vi. Promote Industrial and Regional Value Chain Development.

vii. Invest in Clean Energy Generation and Interconnections to Facilitate Cross-Border Energy Trade and supply of cheap, clean, and renewable energy that is capable of supporting youth businesses, small- and micro-industrial development projects championed by the youth in the IGAD Region.

viii. Promote Integration and Macroeconomic Policy and Research to provide vital data and information for Regional Economic Integration Policies and Legislation, especially targeting the realization of meaningful youth engagement in regional economic integration.

ix. Invest in strategic Transport and ICT Infrastructure Development and Promotion of Digitalization of regional economic and trade activities and processes.

x. Ensure that all IGAD Policy Organs set up for the purposes of implementing the IGAD Youth Policy provisions on Regional Economic Integration feeds

into Meetings of the Council of Ministers and subsequently to Summits by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

b. IGAD Member States role:

i. Boost agricultural production and productivity, and sustain management of natural resources and the environment to ensure resilient national and regional livelihoods and sustained regional economic growth;

ii. Prioritize and increase investment in value addition and industrial diversification, commercialization and expansion of resilient green and blue economies, and sustainable utilization of the natural resources for the increased benefits by young women and men in the region.

iii. Enhance investment in and support of technological innovation for increased production and productivity within a peaceful, cohesive and tolerant society.

iv. Facilitate collaboration at regional, national, continental and international levels within global economic development and integration frameworks that support trade, financial markets, liberalized economy, intra/extra regional infrastructure connectivity within and between IGAD Member States, institutional support mechanisms and that enable integration of SMEs into the production and distribution systems in the existing and emerging markets and business environments.

v. Create opportunities for business start-up or incubator services for youth refugees, returnees and host communities to promote and sustain self-employment.

vi. Mobilize external finance to generate livelihood opportunities for refugees and host communities such as in irrigation schemes.

c. Development Partners and Donor Agencies role:

i. Provide finance and technical assistance support necessary for the development of attendant policies, legislations, programs and institutional strengthening measures necessary for creating an enabling environment for trade, investment and domestic regulations that promotes youth engagement in regional trade and commerce.

ii. Support youth-own initiatives towards implementation of regional economic integration programs, especially through sports, arts, culture, trade and academic work.

iii. Initiate grants and funding mechanisms to promote innovative ideas and projects by the youth in the IGAD Region intended to deepen regional economic integration.

iv. Sponsor research studies on Regional Economic Integration and documentation of best practices within the IGAD Region.

d. Role of Youth CSOs:

i. Increase engagement among civil society/NGOs, trade unions, workers organizations, employer association in refugees' livelihood development in collaboration with private sector and government actors.

ii. Consult Regional Youth CSO Networks and civil society organizations, refugees' associations, trade unions in all aspects of refugees' and returnees' employment initiatives both in formal and informal settings.

iii. Create linkages among and between state and non-state agencies, social partners and other related stakeholders in the actual planning and execution of the return and (re) integration, through the development of a

mechanism to ensure data sharing between the governments and relevant agencies.

iv. Attain social inclusion and conflict prevention by strengthening capacities of the local government to address the needs of the vulnerable groups and people with specific needs including the youth, women and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), minorities.

v. Generate desegregated data on gender and youth, on exact number of returnees and their skills, spontaneous versus organized return data to inform local authorities' analysis, planning and preparedness for (re)integration process.

vi. Invest in communication and awareness activities in countries of origin, return and host country. This will include conducting intention surveys on the refugees who want to return, organizing go and see visits so that they are able to access reliable information about the local situation, peace and security, availability of social services such as health, education, water, and livelihood opportunities to make informed decision to return.

vii. Increase the process of registration and documentation of prospective returnees in the countries of asylum and coordinate the process with the countries of origin.

viii. Conduct post-return integration surveys to monitor the conditions of returnees, including determining the percentage who are able to establish independent livelihoods, gain access to land and/or adequate shelter, or end up living in an IDP camp and ensure that this information is available at the Helpdesks in hosting areas.

3.11 Priority Area No. 10: Youth and Health

3.11.1 Policy Objective

To ensure the health and well-being of youth in the IGAD Region that are able to perform to their maximum abilities and potential.

3.11.2 Strategic Actions

a. IGAD and IGAD Member States role:

i. Adapt and incorporate the key strategic priorities of AHS 2016–2030 into their national health and multi-sectoral policy instruments, with focus on youth-friendly health programs and interventions.

ii. Put in place strong leadership efforts to ensure that the required advocacy, governance, legislative frameworks and actions including resource mobilization and allocations, governance, including legislative frameworks and actions on regional youth and health policies, commitments, declarations, and programs are implemented in order to demonstrate their ownership of AHS 2016–2030.

iii. Undertake routine monitoring, evaluation, research, learning, knowledge documentation and reporting at country level to the RECs and AU Commission on progress made and challenges experienced in implementing IGAD Youth Policy Priority Area No. 10 on youth and health in the IGAD Region.

iv. Ensure good governance, participatory and inclusive approaches required to meaningfully and fully engage the youth, youth CSOs and the private sector to ensure that there is a conducive environment to implement AHS.

v. 2016-2030, including harmonizing and streamlining their own policies, strategies, standards and plans to ensure coherence across the IGAD Region.

vi. Promote and support programmes on personal hygiene, physical fitness and mental health; improve the technical and institutional capacity of youth organizations/CBOs to enable them to effectively advocate and promote health programmes for youth.

vii. Mainstreaming the promotion, prevention, treatment and care mechanism on mental health for the youth from the IGAD Region.

viii. Incorporate representatives of the youth in efforts to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS, Malaria, Tuberculosis and other communicable and non-communicable diseases.

ix. Promote and support youth campaigns aimed at encouraging discouraging early pregnancies, drug and substance abuse, and negative peer influence; Promote and establish home and community-based welfare programmes to help youth orphaned by HIV/AIDS.

x. Establish youth friendly guidance and counseling units in all schools, other learning institutions, youth centers and health centers.

xi. Establish affordable rehabilitation centers to help youth addicted to drugs and substance; Encourage parents to take a lead role in guidance and counseling their children on responsible sexual behavior.

xii. Promote partnerships between the government, CSOs and the private sector to invest in youth friendly health facilities; improve access to voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) services for all youth.

xiii. Enhance the youth's capacity in leadership and advocacy to enable them support and manage youth health programmes.

xiv. Promote research in youth health related areas and make the findings accessible to inform action and intervention.

xv. Improve access to mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services including any support provided to protect or promote the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of youth migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

xvi. Ensure that all IGAD Policy Organs set up for the purposes of implementing the IGAD Youth Policy provisions on Health feed into Meetings of the Council of Ministers and subsequently to Summits by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

b. Development Partners role:

i. Contribute their technical assistance and financial investments in support of IGAD Youth Policy imperatives for youth and health.

ii. Align their financial and technical assistance and cooperation plans with national and regional needs and priorities for implementation of IGAD Youth Policy Priority Area No. 10 as read together with AHS 2016 – 2030 and the SDG Agenda 2030.

iii. Incorporate representatives of the youth in donor-roundtables convened to discuss and strategize role of youth and youth organizations in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS, Malaria, Tuberculosis and other communicable and non-communicable diseases.

iv. Promote and support youth campaigns aimed at encouraging a change in sexual behavior and discouraging teenage and early pregnancies, Child marriage, FGM, drug and substance abuse, and negative peer influence; Promote and establish home and community-based welfare programmes to help youth orphaned by HIV/AIDS.

v. Support the establishment of youth friendly guidance and counseling units in all schools, other learning institutions, youth and health centers.

vi. Support the establishment of affordable rehabilitation centers to help youth addicted to drugs and substance; Encourage parents to take a lead role in guidance and counseling their children on responsible sexual behavior.

vii. Promote and support programmes on sexual and reproductive health, mental and psychosocial health for the youth, personal hygiene, physical fitness; improve the technical and institutional capacity of youth organizations/CBOs to enable them to effectively advocate and promote health programmes for youth.

viii. Promote partnerships between the government, CSOs and the private sector to invest in youth friendly health facilities; improve access to voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) services for all youth.

ix. Support programs and development projects with components on development of youth's capacity in leadership and advocacy to enable them support and manage youth health and wellbeing programme.

x. Promote research in youth health related areas and make the findings accessible to inform policy and legislative decisions, actions and interventions.

c. Youth Civil Society Organizations

As key stakeholders, youth CSOs shall play an active role in the conceptualization, advocacy, mobilization, technical assistance, implementation and oversight in support of the implementation of IGAD Youth Policy priority on health and ensure actions are aligned to AHS 2016–2030.

d. Private Sector health service providers

The private sector health service providers will provide innovation, material and co-financing inputs that contribute to the expanded financial, human, infrastructural and technological resource base needed to improve health sector performance in the IGAD Region for the ultimate benefit of the youth.

3.12 Priority Area No. 11: Youth, Gender Equity and Inclusion

3.12.1 Policy Objective

To build up a framework that supports the full inclusion of the youth in all their diversities.

3.12.2 Strategic Actions

Gender Equity and Inclusion shall be attained and sustained through the following strategic actions: -

a. Role of IGAD Secretariat

xi. Lead, guide, defend and coordinate the IGAD's efforts on gender equality, development and promoting women's and youth's empowerment in collaboration with member states.

xii. Design programs and projects based on the IGAD Youth Policy priority areas, with special focus on the nexus between the priorities and gender equality and inclusion of young women and men in the IGAD Processes.

xiii. Oversee the development and implementation of national and regional gender policies that enables interpretation and domestication of the IGAD Youth Policy Priority Area No. 10 and read with GEWE Principles and Strategies for Gender Equality and Equity.

xiv. Define and elaborate strategies for gender and youth issues mainstreaming with the IGAD Secretariat and all its Divisions and Specialized Units and

Agencies, Member States and other primary stakeholder agencies and groups working with IGAD to attain Gender Equality and Equity Goals.

xv. Support capacity building of Member States, Youth CSOs and other critical partners by designing and providing training on gender and youth policies, development instruments, funding mechanisms and project design and implementation paradigms.

xvi. Champion and coordinate regional and international young women and men development initiatives that takes into consideration gender mainstreaming lenses at national, regional, continental and international levels with specific attention to:

a) Poverty and women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship

b) Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security.

c) Young women and men's health, education, science and technology.

d) Young women and men's contribution to improving environmental quality and mitigating climate change impacts.

e) Youth peace and security.

f) Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

g) Governance and Legal Protection for Young Women and Girls;

h) Finance and Financing of Gender Mainstreaming Programs and Projects.

i) Women in decision-making positions and platforms among other imperatives.

xvii. Oversight key gender policy issues and track overall performance on GEWE at the national and regional level through Annual Meetings of Ministers Responsible for Women/Gender/Youth and Cultural Affairs in Member States.

xviii. Ensure that all IGAD Policy Organs set up for the purposes of implementing the IGAD Youth Policy provisions on Gender Equity and Inclusion feed into Meetings of the Council of Ministers and subsequently to Summits by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

b. IGAD Member States role:

i. Ensure equity for young men and women through enforcement of national, regional and international; legislation, conventions, protocols and Instruments affecting them.

ii. Make efforts to enhance awareness and sensitization of the society regarding negative cultural attitudes and practices against young men and women including youth with disabilities.

iii. Ensure gender parity in all national policies, programmes and institutions and create a conducive gender environment for all young men and women to participate and thrive.

iv. Implement, monitor, and evaluate, research, document lessons and share experiences on the implementation of GEWE Pillars and their impact on the young women and men.

c. Role of Development Partners:

i. Ensure effectiveness of gender equity and inclusion financing mechanisms in achieving IGAD Gender Policy Goals and Targets, especially as regards young women and men in the Region.

ii. Support the institutional and organizational strengthening and capacity building programs of IGAD Youth Policy on Gender, Inclusion and coordination of Gender Mainstreaming within IGAD Secretariat divisions, policies, legislations, programs, projects and offices.

iii. Technically and financially, support systematic tracking of the promotion of youth, gender equity and inclusion by IGAD Secretariat divisions, programs and specialized offices.

iv. Support Technically and financially capacity of IGAD institutions to make gender-aware development policies, plans and programs at all levels.

d. Role Youth CSOs:

i. In collaboration with IGAD Gender Institutions and Development Partners, develop and implement innovative, creative and culturally sensitive gender-based projects and programs.

ii. Contribute to generation of gender disaggregated data and information from IGAD Youth Policy Implementation to support decision making and program formulation.

iii. Enhance gender awareness and sensitization within their respective communities and regions.

iv. Mobilize local and international resources to implement the IGAD Youth Policy Priority Area No. 11 at the national and regional level.

v. Participate in IGAD Gender Mainstreaming Roundtable Sessions to provide updates on progress made by their respective actions and projects in the implementation of GEWE.

3.13 Priority Area No. 12: Youth Culture, Sports, and Creative Industries

3.13.1 Policy Objective

Guarantee the organization, production, distribution, exhibition and preservation cultural, sports and creative products generated and or developed by the young women and men in the IGAD Region including facilitating the patenting and copyrighting of intellectual properties, culture and arts products and nurturing and promoting of the youth's sporting talents across the IGAD Region.

3.13.2 Strategic Actions

a. Role of IGAD Secretariat:

i. Mobilize the entire IGAD Member States to develop, ratify and domesticate IGAD Regional Charter for Culture, Sports and Creative Industries.

ii. Promote the development of, or incorporation in, regional and sub-regional public libraries that provide facilities for people living with disabilities in order to make the libraries more inclusive.

iii. Organize and facilitate Meetings of Ministers of Culture and Sports focusing on strategies to increase the number of ratifications, domestication and implementation of the IGAD Regional Charter for Culture, Sports and Creative Industries and the needs of the sector.

iv. Take a leading role in the enforcement and implementation of Anti-doping programmes in the IGAD Region.

v. Lobby for the hosting of Regional, Continental and International Olympic Games within IGAD Region as shall from time to time be recommended by Council of Ministers for Culture, Sports and Creative Industries.

vi. Develop measures, actions and policy interventions to protect the integrity of Culture, Sports, and Creative Industries inclusive access for all to Sport, Physical Education, Cultural Events and physical activities and maximizing the contribution of sport, culture and creative industries to Regional Sustainable Development, Peace and Security and enhanced Regional Integration as per the IGAD's core mandate.

vii. Promote and institutionalize IGAD Regional Paralympic Committee and support sporting, cultural and creative talents by youth with physical and mental impairments in the IGAD Region.

viii. Organize and host annual "IGAD Paralympic Games" to be held every four years in the lead to the Annual International Paralympic Games or the Games of the Paralympian including the World Para Athletic Championship and encourage Members States to volunteer to host such games as per annual Regional Para Games to be published and circulated by IGAD Secretariat.

ix. Facilitate and ensure harmonious relationship between IGAD Culture, Sports and Creative Sector and other international bodies with similar focus and mandate for the purpose of building synergies while tapping into the Member States' differential strengths in Youth Sports, Culture and Creative Arts.

x. Create and Host IGAD Executive Secretary Youth Dialogue Platform on Youth Culture, Sports and Creative Industry Development as a source of gainful employment and source of sustainable livelihoods for the youth in the IGAD Region.

xi. Rally IGAD Member States to harmonize their Copyright and Intellectual Property Policies and Laws for effective management of copyrights and intellectual properties across the IGAD Region.

xii. Ensure that all IGAD Policy Organs set up for the purposes of implementing the IGAD Youth Policy provisions on Youth Culture, Sports and Creative Industries feeds into Meetings of the Council of Ministers in charge of Culture Sports, Tourism and Creative and Performing Arts or their equivalent and subsequently to Summits by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

b. IGAD Member States role:

i. Ratify and domesticate IGAD Regional Charter for Culture, Sports and Creative Industries.

ii. Incorporate gender, cultural, and disability dimensions in the design and development of all their public libraries to provide facilities for people living with disabilities and from diverse cultural and social backgrounds to feel increasingly catered for in all public libraries and museums.

iii. Ensure effective participation of Ministers of Culture, Sports, and Youth representative in all National and Regional Meetings focusing on implementation and or review of strategies to increase number of ratifications, domestication and implementation of the IGAD Regional Charter for Culture, Sports and Creative Industries and to design policies,

legislations, programmes and interventions that address the needs of the sector.

iv. Take a leading role in the enforcement and implementation of Anti-doping programmes in the respective member state.

v. Host Regional, Continental and International Olympic Games depending on individual Member State Capacity and readiness in collaboration with other Member States and Stakeholder and as from time to time shall be lobbied and recommended by IGAD Council of Ministers for Culture, Sports and Creative Industries.

vi. Develop measures, actions and policy interventions to protect the integrity of Culture, Sports, and Creative Industries inclusive access for all to Sport, Physical Education, Cultural Events and physical activities and maximizing the contribution of sport, culture and creative industries to National Sustainable Development, Peace and Security and enhanced Regional Integration as per the IGAD's core mandate; Create an enabling environment and support mechanism for sporting, cultural and creative talents by the youth with physical and mental impairments in the Member States to thrive and contribute to effective youth development and empowerment.

vii. On the advice of IGAD Secretariat's Paralympic Committee, organize and host national and sub-national "IGAD Paralympic Games" at the national and sub-national levels taking into account the inclusive participation of all Paralympians from grassroots to national levels.

viii. Ensure National Youth Culture, Sports, and Creative Industries' Policies, Legislations and Programs are in harmony with the IGAD Culture, Sports and Creative Industry Policies, Legislations and Institutional Framework for effective performance tracking and reviews; financing and funding mechanism tracking; and overall performance management of the sector.

ix. Ensure that National Copyright and Intellectual Property Policies and Laws are harmonized with IGAD Regional Copyrights and Intellectual Properties Policies, Legislations and Practice Guidelines for effective implementation of such protocols.

3.14. Priority Area No. 13: Youth in the Diaspora

3.14.1 Policy Objective

To integrate the IGAD Youth in the Diaspora in the Regional and Member States' development agenda by creating an enabling and supportive environment and coordination platform for their effective participation in and contribution to the successful implementation of and benefit of the IGAD Region from IGAD Youth Policy Implementation, particularly with regards to Policy Priority Area No. 13.

3.14.2 Strategic Actions

a. IGAD and IGAD Member States role:

i. Mainstream Diaspora participation in the IGAD Regional Youth Development Agenda and Action Plan implementation through and across IGAD Divisions, Departments, Special Entities, Partnership Frameworks and the wide range of policy activity including the flagship Agenda 2063.

ii. Strengthening the operational capacity of the IGAD Policy Implementation Institutions on Youth in the Diaspora to support Diaspora involvement in IGAD Regional Development Programmes and activities through regular communication and flow of information IGAD events and activities and vice-versa, including cross-fertilization of IGAD programs with Youth

Diaspora activities and mapping of IGAD Youth in the Diaspora around the world.

iii. Serve as focal point for accreditation of Diaspora organizations, networks and projects including their investment and enterprise development activities and as observers, delegates, participants in all IGAD Summits and other high-level ministerial and technocrats' meetings convened, and for which youth in the diaspora is an agenda.

iv. Managing and coordinating other forms of interaction between the IGAD, IGAD Member States and Diaspora Organizations worldwide. This includes collaboration on policy and advocacy efforts of Diaspora networks and coalitions, technical support and assistance, enabling framework of cooperation and working relations.

v. Create structures and mechanisms that enable participation of Youth in the Diaspora in the Regional Youth CSOs pre-Summit forums and promote effective collaboration between Diaspora Civil Society Organization and approximate bodies within the IGAD Region.

vi. Promote effective linkages between the Youth in the Diaspora and various organs and Divisions of IGAD and functional democratic and organizational institutions of all IGAD Member States.

vii. Interface the IGAD Youth in the Diaspora with the work of different departments of the IGAD Youth Policy Institution, Organs, Programmes and Projects and their efforts to ensure tracking of the impact of the diaspora contribution to Regional and National Socio-Economic Growth and Development

SECTION FOUR

4.0 THE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

4.1 Section introduction

The section outlines key stakeholders in the process of ratification, adoption and implementation of the IGAD Youth Policy 2023. These institutional arrangements are derived from the 1996 Agreement IGAD and its attendant policies and legislations at the Regional and National Levels.

These Organs and Institutions are as follows:

4.2 The IGAD Summit of Heads of State and Government

According to the 21 March 1996 Agreement Establishing the IGAD (Herein also referred to as, "The Agreement"), IGAD superseded the IGADD as established in 1986 by the then drought afflicted six Eastern African countries if Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. The State of Eritrea was admitted as the seventh member of the IGAD at the fourth Summit of Heads of State and Government. Upon becoming an Independent State on 9 July 2011, South Sudan was admitted to the UN General Assembly on 14 July 2011, AU and IGAD on 27 July 2011 as the eighth member of IGAD.

Since the admission into IGAD of South Sudan, the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government now is composed of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. The Assembly is the supreme policy making organ of the Authority. It sits annually to determine the objectives, guidelines, policies, legal and institutional frameworks including programs for the IGAD in accordance with Article 9 of the 1996 Agreement.

The Summit shall play a critical role in the ratification, adoption and implementation of the IGAD Youth Policy (2023) as follows:

i. Determine and direct IGAD Policy Organs, Divisions, Departments and Specialized Institutions and Programmes to prioritize the implementation of IGAD Youth Policy's 13 Priority Areas at national and regional level; and

ii. Determine the main guidelines, programs and approve budgets and programmes for cooperation in line with the key strategic actions areas enlisted under each Policy Priority Areas (PPAs); and

iii. Give guidelines and monitor pertinent political and international policy issues that may have impact on the implementation of the IGAD Youth Policy and institute relevant measures to counter and or mitigate the same; and

iv. Provide policy, legislative and institutional guidelines and frameworks necessary for ensuring effective implementation of the IGAD Youth Policy at national and regional level and ensure the results from the policy implementation feeds into AU Agenda 2063 and UN SDG Agenda 2030 as well as into respective Member State's National Youth Development Policies and Programmes; and

v. Determine and approve the scale and or scope of Member State's contributions to the overall budget for the IGAD Youth Policy Implementation as shall be determined by the IGAD Secretariat and approved by the Council of Ministers and Ambassadors; and

vi. On the advice of the Council of Ministers and the Committee of Ambassadors, second young women and men from their respective Member States to the Annual IGAD Youth Forum, IGAD Youth Council and IGAD Youth Advisory Board.

4.3 IGAD Council of Ministers

The IGAD Council of Ministers, herein also referred to as "the Council" is composed of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and one other focal Minister designated by each Member State (depending on the agenda or issues of interest at a particular time tabled before the council). The Council is established under Article 10 of the Agreement to among other functions:

i. Make recommendations to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government (the Assembly) on all matters of policy aimed at the efficient functioning and development of the IGAD.

ii. Approve the Authority's work plan and budget.

iii. Promote, monitor, coordinate, and harmonize the IGAD's Regional Policy, Programmes and Initiatives for the realization of IGAD Objectives.

iv. Monitor the implementation of the decisions of the Assembly.

v. Prepare the agenda for the Assembly.

vi. Promote peace and security in the sub-region and make recommendations to the Assembly.

vii. Undertake any other functions assigned to it by the Assembly, among others.

For the purpose of the implementation of the IGAD Youth Policy (2022), the Council shall:

i. Approve the policy and set it as an agenda for the Assembly for purpose of ratification and approval by the Member States for its full implementation as a Regional Youth Development Policy Framework.

ii. Assist the Secretariat in the development, costing, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and documentation of lessons and experiences through Policy Implementation Annual Work Plans, Performance Monitoring and Management Plans (PMMPs) and Budgets.

4.4 The Committee of Ambassadors

The Committee is composed of Member State's Ambassadors or Plenipotentiaries accredited to the Country of the headquarters of the Authority, in this case, Djibouti. The Committee is set up under Article 11 of the Agreement Establishing IGAD.

For supporting the implementation of the IGAD Youth Policy (2022), the Committee shall, by virtue of its assigned functions in the Agreement:

i. Advise the Executive Secretary on the interpretation and application of applicable policies, legislations and guidelines in the Member States to advancement of the objectives of the IGAD Youth Policy.

ii. Advise the Executive Secretary on the most appropriate and applicable strategies, approaches and methodologies to adopt and implement for effective realization of the IGAD Youth Policy Objectives at Member State and Regional Levels.

iii. Follow-up the activities of the IGAD Secretariat with regard to implementation of decisions and directives of the Assembly and the Council related to implementation, review and evaluation of the IGAD Youth Policy.

iv. Advise their respective Member States on all decisions, resolutions, action plans and commitment of the Assembly and the Council as related to the IGAD Youth Policy implementation, review, evaluation and knowledge management and dissemination within IGAD Region, AU level and internationally.

4.5 The IGAD Secretariat

The Secretariat is headed by the Executive Secretary appointed by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government upon the recommendation of the Council of Ministers. The Executive Secretary serves a term of four (4) years renewable once. The current Executive Secretary is HE Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu from Ethiopia.

The IGAD Secretariat, as established under Article 12 of the Agreement, exists to:

i. Implement the decisions of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government and the Council of Ministers; and

ii. Prepare draft proposals and agreements on matters arising from the decisions and recommendations of the Assembly and the Council; and

iii. Prepare surveys, studies, information and guidelines on legal, political, economic, social, cultural and technical matters of common concern to Member States and that are essential for broadening and deepening cooperative among the Member States; and

iv. Initiate, identify, and coordinate development programmes and projects; and

v. Be responsible to service the meetings of the Assembly, Council of Ministers and that of other IGAD Policy Organs.

For effective implementation of the IGAD Youth Policy (2023) and its enabling and facilitative programmes, projects and interventions, the IGAD Secretariat role is to: -

i. Assist IGAD Member States in formulating regional and national youth development, empowerment and protection programmes along the listed 13 PPAs; and

ii. Facilitate the coordination, harmonization and rollout of regional youth development, empowerment and protection policies, legislations, programmes, projects, activities and institutional frameworks necessary for advancing the concept of "Meaningful Youth Engagement in IGAD Processes"; and

iii. Develop and implement a regional resource mobilization strategy for the IGAD Youth Policy (2023) to finance and technically support its implementation at regional and member state levels; and

iv. In partnerships with IGAD Member States and International Development Partners, reinforce, strengthen, capacitate and facilitate youth groups, youth CBOs, youth CSOs, youth NGOs and National and Regional Youth Policy Organs to ensure they have sufficient resources, technically competencies and professional endowments to effectively contribute to the implementation of the IGAD Youth Policy (2023); and

v. Ensure that all IGAD Youth Policy Organs and Programmes set up by the Assembly upon the recommendations of the Council of Ministers for purposes of implementing specific and some inter-related IGAD Youth Policy Priority Areas feeds into all IGAD Structures including Specialized entities, and that reports from the structures and specialized entities eventually feeds into the Summit of Heads of State and Government for purposes of tracking policy implementation progress and evaluating its regional and national impacts in the youth.

Article 13 establishes the Office of the Executive Secretary of IGAD as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Authority. In the implementation of the IGAD Youth Policy (2023) and all its attendant programmes, projects, interventions and related actions, the CEO role is to;

i. Initiate measures aimed at promoting the objectives of the Policy within all IGAD Policy Organs, Divisions, Departments, Programmes and Specialized Entities through heightened mainstreaming of the PPAs into the IGAD's overall development mechanisms and strategies.

ii. Promote cooperation with organizations, institutions and corporations with similar objectives in the furtherance of the IGAD Youth Policy objectives.

iii. Consult and coordinate with the governments, UN Agencies, Bi-Lateral Development Partners, Multilateral Development Partners and Regional Youth Organizations to ensure conformity and harmony of their development priorities with the IGAD Youth Policy Framework and its priorities.

iv. Organize and host an annual IGAD Regional Youth Forum to review policy implementation and performance status at the Member State's and Regional Level and make recommendations to the Council and the Assembly for further action aimed at improving efficacy of the policy implementation processes and actions.

v. Organize meetings and sessions with the Assembly, the Council and any other meetings with critical youth development and empowerment stakeholders convened on the direction of the Council of Ministers or the Assembly to review and evaluate policy implementation progress status, results realization and impact evaluation on both medium- and end-term basis.

vi. Prepare annual reports (qualitative and quantitative, narrative and financial, and pictorial/visual) including mid-term and end-term evaluation excel sheets with indicator monitoring and tracking sheets.

vii. Prepare recommendations concerning the Council's approved work plan implementation for submission to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

viii. Negotiate, with the consent and approval of the Council of Ministers, Policy Financing Instruments and Agreements with local and international development partners including with the private sectors' corporate social responsibility programmes.

4.6 The IGAD Sectoral Council on Gender, Children, Youth and social protection

Subject to directions by the IGAD Council of Ministers, this Sectoral Council role is to:

i. Be responsible for the preparation of a comprehensive implementation Programme and the setting out of priorities with respect to the youth.

ii. Monitor and keep under constant review the implementation of the programmes of the Community with respect to the youth.

iii. Submit from time to time, reports and recommendations to the Council concerning the implementation of the provisions of this Policy.

iv. Have such other functions as may be conferred on it by or under this Policy and the Treaty establishing the Intergovernmental Authority on Development

4.7 The IGAD Youth Advisory Board

4.7.1 Functions of the Board

This policy seeks to establish the IGAD Youth Advisory Board within the IGAD. The mandate of the Board is as follows: -

i. To provide a platform for the youth in the IGAD Region and youth CSOs to effectively engage and contribute towards the integration process of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

ii. To provide a platform for youth in IGAD region to build partnerships and networks to strengthen the IGAD Youth Advisory committee.

iii. To consider, advocate and promote relevant legal instruments and frameworks at the regional level to advance the rights and freedoms of the youth in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

iv. To provide a mechanism for the youth to engage with the IGAD Community's Organs and Institutions.

v. To facilitate the engagement of youth serving organizations whose goals are geared toward the respect for and realization of human rights of all youth in the IGAD Region; To serve as a visible and reference body for youth issues in IGAD Region.

vi. To foster the spirit of camaraderie and common citizenry amongst the youth in IGAD Region.

vii. To present a unified and common position on all matters relating to youth in IGAD Region.

viii. To build the capacity of member organizations to fully explore their potential in their spheres of operation.

4.7.2 Composition of the IGAD Youth Advisory Board:

i. IGAD member state will each have four (4) representatives (2 males and 2 females) in the advisory Board, 2 representatives from the Regional Youth Civil Society Network, a technical representative from each of the IGAD divisions and specialized entities, and 1 representative from office of the Executive Secretary of IGAD and the Office of the Chair of IGAD Summit as at the time.

ii. No gender should occupy more than 2/3 of the representative positions per Member state.

iii. The Council of Minister shall develop and implement a standard criterion for countries to follow when nominating any of the representatives to the above positions for the Council to vet and forward to the Assembly for approval.

SECTION FIVE

5.0 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING PLAN

5.1. Section introduction

The section presents structured policy coordination, implementation and domestication mechanisms.

5.2 The IGAD Youth Policy Implementation and Coordination Mechanism

The IGAD Youth Policy will be operationalized through a ten-year implementation plan, which will further be organized into and delivered through an annual operational work plan to be developed by the Secretariat and approved by the IGAD Assembly upon recommendation by the Council of Ministers.

The ten-year implementation plan is guided and informed by the comprehensive nature of the policy and its intricate inter-relationship with other regional policies, legislations and programmes as well as its broad inter-sectoral, multi-level, and multi-stakeholder approach, bringing together all IGAD Policy Organs, Divisions, Specialized Institutions, Member States' MDAs, Development Agencies and Youth Development and Empowerment Stakeholders under a unified approach to tackling of youth issues in the IGAD Region.

The policy proposes that IGAD Secretariat, in consultation with Council of Ministers and Committee of Ambassadors, shall develop a policy implementation matrix that shall:

i. Create a collaboration and networking platform for all Policy Stakeholders to freely and strategically interact and compare notes on their respective levels of efforts required from time-to-time to implement the Policy Priority Areas.

ii. Outline key milestones in the form of short-, medium-, and long-term policy performance outputs, outcomes and impact, providing corresponding objectively verifiable indicators at each level of policy performance tracking and corresponding timelines for tracking each indicator using a Logical Framework and Critical Path Analysis Approaches.

iii. Develop annual budget for PPAs implementation as disaggregated by specific targets and indicators.

The emphasis on a Results-Based Management implementation approach is in line with IGAD Results-Based Management and Monitoring approach and the need for greater transparency, accountability and in adherence with the principle of the "Best Interest of the Child" that this policy advocates for.

5.3 Policy implementation Mechanism and Roles of Member States

The IGAD Member States role is to continually update/develop and pursue various youth development, empowerment and protection policies, laws and strategies in order to create conducive conditions, policy, legal frameworks, and environments for sound IGAD Youth Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation, Reviews, Knowledge, and Best Practices sharing among and within member states.

IGAD's role will continue to be in line with efforts that will lead to the development of policy implementation instruments, institutional structures and reporting systems at the national and regional level, which will in turn allow for cross-border harmony and seamless coordination of the IGAD Youth Policy Implementation Structures and Organs.

The youth policy and its related legal issues of regional relevance and concerns pertain to strategic areas of cooperation in the IGAD Region. It is therefore the role of IGAD to initiate, support and lead the process of harmonizing youth development, empowerment and protection policies, laws, programs, projects and interventions in the region. This

responsibility envisages the identification of relevant fields together with the member states, carrying out policy studies and reviews, proposing policy, programming and legislative options to Member States, and providing a regional youth forum for discussion and advice on the mechanisms for the implementation of the youth policies, laws, programs, projects and interventions across the IGAD Region. The approach allows for the promotion of compatible and harmonious regional youth policies, laws, programs, projects and interventions across the IGAD Region; and the development of strategies and concepts of regional relevance to the aspirations of the youth (women and men) including children in the IGAD Region.

Member states of IGAD have varying capacities and institutional strengths in youth development and empowerment strategies planning, design and program implementation, with many of them lacking capacity to prepare bankable youth development and empowerment proposals and business plans that are attractive enough to attract the necessary turn-key funding from international development partners to formulate and implement comprehensive and nationally targeted youth development and empowerment projects and programs.

Experience indicates that having readily available bankable youth development and empowerment proposals and business plans and clear prioritization of youth issues in the Sub-Saharan Africa (a home to 70% of the global youth population), and particularly in national development strategies makes it attractive for national governments and development partners to allocate substantial amounts of funding to support implementation of youth development and empowerment programs.

In response to the above gaps, IGAD will support member states to: -

i. Create awareness among youth and youth CSOs on the process of developing appropriate strategies and concepts in line with the 13 PPAs.

ii. Comply with the provisions of, and benefit from, the international instruments mentioned and applied in the formulation and development of the IGAD Youth Policy (2023).

iii. Enhance development of national youth policies, legislations, programs and projects that are in conformity with and by setting up a fund to support member states to formulate and implement national level youth actions plans in response to the imperative objectives of the IGAD Youth Policy (2023).

iv. Create and annually host a National and Regional Dialogue Platforms on IGAD Youth Policy Implementation Review, update or review the strategic priority areas, and make recommendations to the IGAD Secretariat.

5.4 The IGAD Youth Policy Dissemination and Popularization Strategies

Policy dissemination and popularization strategies refers to targeted distribution of tailored information, communication and intervention materials to a specific group of audience or intended consumers of a piece or pieces of targeted information at a particular time during policy implementation period. The intent is to spread knowledge and the associated evidence-based interventions with an intention to attract and or maintain partnerships, collaborations, networks and support or strengthen pragmatic approaches and methodologies.

Policy dissemination and popularization strategies adapted by IGAD Youth Policy include among others:

i. Publication of the policy in the AU, IGAD, UN and International Development Partners' Websites.

ii. Working with researchers and scholars to conduct studies and publish research findings related to the policy in peer reviewed research journals.

iii. Sponsoring radio and TV documentaries on the various aspects of the policy implementation and success stories sharing.

iv. Using all other applicable and suitable print, electronic and visual arts strategies to communicate and disseminate the policy and its projects/programmes.

SECTION SIX

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IGAD YOUTH POLICY AND OTHER TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

6.1 Policy validation and implementation process

The validation and implementation of the IGAD Youth Policy will be in accordance with the Art. 10-3 of the Establishing Agreement, which allows for sectoral ministries to exercise delegated powers of the Council of Ministers to deal with issues in their respective sectors.

6.2 Harmonization of Regional Policies, Legislation and Institutional Frameworks

The IGAD Youth Policy successful implementation depends much to the extent with which it is harmonized and integrated into other existing Continental, Regional, National and Sub-National policies, legislations, programmes and actions.

The IGAD Secretariat, in collaboration with Member States, Continental and Regional Youth CSO Networks, International Development Partners and other RECs, shall works towards a Youth Policy, Programme and Legislation harmonization and coherence creation and cascading of the IGAD Youth Policy into existing Regional and Country-level instruments for youth development and empowerment including donor-funded, privately-supported and publicly-funded youth initiatives.

To attain the seamless harmonization of youth policies, legislations and programmes, systematic and concerted effort is required to conduct a Study of Existing National Youth Policies, Laws, Programs and Institutional Arrangements to determine their extant and efficacy in addressing youth issues identified in the IGAD Youth Policy. A Comparative Study of other Regional Economic Communities' Youth Policies, Laws and Programs is also necessary to investigate and determine similarities, differences and abilities to create and sustain continental momentum in tackling youth issues of common interest to the African Continent's Youth.