

**Khartoum Declaration:  
Ministerial Conference on  
Internally Displaced Persons  
In the IGAD Sub-Region**

**We**, the Ministers representing the Member States of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) meeting in Khartoum,

**Noting** the conclusions and recommendations of the Experts Meeting from 30<sup>th</sup> August to 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2003;

**Considering** the situation of internally displaced persons, (IDPs) in the sub-region;

**Recalling** the decision taken by the IGAD Council of Ministers during the AU Summits in Durban and Maputo in 2002 and 2003 respectively, to convene an IGAD ministerial meeting on the issue of internal displacement caused by natural and man made disasters;

**Cognizant** of the fact that the aims and objectives of IGAD include promoting peace, stability and development in the sub-region, and determining that finding durable solutions to internal displacement is an indispensable step to realizing lasting peace stability and development;

**Reaffirming** the undertaking by the IGAD Member States to facilitate the voluntary return, reintegration or resettlement of displaced persons in cooperation with relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations in accordance with the existing national, regional and international instruments;

**Recognizing** that the problems of internal displacement affect all Member States in the sub-region and constitute a threat to socio-

economic development, political stability, national security and the environment;

**Noting** with great concern that displaced women, children, elderly and disabled persons constitute the majority of the internally displaced and are often among the most vulnerable;

**Noting** with deep concern also that resources made available by the international donor community are still below the basic needs of the IDPs;

**Reaffirming** that the primary responsibility of protecting and assisting the internally displaced and finding durable solution lies with the national Governments and that the role of the international community is to complement the national effort ;

**Taking note** of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as a useful tool for developing and evaluating appropriate national policies and legislation on internal displacement and noting also that the Principles compile the existing international law related to internal displacement;

1. **Express** our concern over the persisting problem of internal displacement in the region, and the growing deterioration of the humanitarian situation of the IDPs, due to the recurrence of natural disasters and intra - and interstate conflicts ;
2. **Take note** with appreciation of the efforts of the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons and commend him for promoting prevention of internal displacement, assistance to internally displaced persons, and durable solutions to their plight;

3. **Commend** the efforts of the Member States , UN agencies, other international agencies, donors as well as national and international NGO's which have continued to provide assistance to IDPs;
4. **Call upon** the international community to continue providing support for meeting the urgent needs of IDPs and in implementing rehabilitation, recovery and sustainable development programmes;
5. **Call** for the strengthening of co-operation between IGAD, AU, the UN and its agencies, particularly the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other humanitarian organizations, with a view to coordinating their programmes and activities related to IDPs and streamlining their actions in the struggle to mitigate disasters in the sub-region;
6. **Reiterate our commitment to continue to** address the root causes of the problem of internal displacement and to continue creating conditions conducive for voluntary return and reintegration, local integration or resettlement of IDPs;
7. **Agree** to cooperate in encouraging the development of comprehensive national policies on internal displacement and in this regard,
  - i. **Acknowledge** that such policies must be consistent with international human rights and humanitarian law;
  - ii. **Note** that the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement can serve as a useful tool for addressing IDP issues;

**iii. Commit** ourselves to continue directing particular attention to the development of policies ensuring the protection of the internally displaced and to addressing the needs of especially vulnerable groups, such as women heads-of-household, children, disabled and elderly persons;

**iv. Reaffirm** that such policies should take into account the needs and rights of internally displaced persons as well as the host communities;

**v. Call** upon the international community to support Member States in developing such policies;

8. Pledge and urge all concerned actors to provide humanitarian access to internally displaced persons for humanitarian organizations and to protect the safety and security of humanitarian workers;
9. **Call upon** the international community and member states to provide the necessary funds for the IGAD Executive Secretary to establish a unit on forced displacement within the IGAD Secretariat to, inter alia, collect data on displacement in the region, disseminate the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, provide technical assistance to member states in developing and monitoring policies on internal displacement, and explore further means of sub-regional cooperation to address issues of forced displacement;
10. **Endorse** the proposal of the Current Chairman of IGAD Council of Ministers to declare the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September of each year as IGAD IDPs Day;

11. **Reiterate the** need for firm commitment of all authorities in the IGAD sub-region to intensify their efforts with a view to finding lasting and durable solutions to the problems of displacement in order to enhance the prospects for long-term peace, security and development;
12. **Urge** Member States and all authorities in the IGAD region to continue to ensure the full participation of all segments of the displaced populations, in particular women and children, in decision-making on issues which affect their rights and welfare, including voluntary return, reintegration, local integration, resettlement and peace building programmes;
13. **Appeal** to Member States and the International Community to provide support and resources for reconstruction, resettlement and rehabilitation efforts of countries emerging from conflicts;
14. **Intensify** efforts aimed at enhancing democracy, rule of law, good governance, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and international humanitarian law in order to ensure stability and security in the sub-region;
15. **Call on** Member States to take the necessary steps to implement the relevant provisions in the Declaration and Recommendations adopted by the OAU Ministerial Conference on Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons held in Khartoum, Sudan from 13-14 December 1998;
16. **Invite** Member States to work out modalities to ensure the implementation of this Declaration and to report

progress on implementation to the 23rd Session of the  
IGAD Council of Ministers.

**Khartoum, Sudan**

**2 September 2003**