WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

REGIONAL STRATEGY
2020–2024

IOM
UN MIGRATION

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

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FOREWORD

In November 2019, the IOM Strategic Vision was presented to Member States. It reflects the Organization's view of how it will need to develop over a five-year period, in order to effectively address complex challenges and seize the many opportunities migration offers to both migrants and society. It responds to new and emerging responsibilities – including membership in the United Nations and coordination of the United Nations Network on Migration – as we enter the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. As part of the implementation of the Strategic Vision, I asked each of the Regional Offices to develop its own strategic priorities for the 2020–2024 period, integrating key elements of the Vision to respond to emerging needs within the region.

This regional strategy reflects the essential role that IOM plays in the field of human mobility: protecting, assisting and supporting migrants across the world, developing effective responses to the shifting dynamics of migration, and serving as a key source of advice on migration policy, research, data and practice. It also highlights the critical work that IOM undertakes in emergency situations, developing the resilience of communities and mobile populations, and particularly those in vulnerable situations, while building capacity within governments to manage all forms and impacts of mobility.

Most importantly, this strategy highlights the current and future regional and cross-regional trends and challenges with respect to migration and situations of displacement, and outlines how IOM will seek to address them, including through collaboration with United Nations agencies and other partners.

I would like to thank colleagues at all levels of the Organization – and particularly at the regional and country levels – for their diligent and insightful work in developing this strategy, which places IOM's global strategic objectives in context and sets out a course of action to achieve them. It is particularly timely, given the high salience of human mobility in public discourse, and as operational needs on the ground, particularly in the humanitarian sphere, are becoming more complex in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under this strategy, IOM colleagues will engage with a wide range of stakeholders in all countries in the region, along with key regional bodies, including economic communities, consultative processes and multilateral forums, on the priorities it sets out. I and all my colleagues look forward to working with you over the next years to ensure that migration is safe, orderly and regular for the benefit of all. Together, we can respond to the needs and aspirations of migrants and displaced populations around the world, building societies fit for a modern, mobile and interconnected world.

António Vitorino
Director General
International Organization for Migration

CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

COVID-19	coronavirus 2019
CSO	civil society organization
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GDP	gross domestic product
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
IDP(s)	internally displaced person(s)
IHR	(World Health Organization) International Health Regulations
IOM	International Organization for Migration
PoE	point of entry
SDG(s)	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDS	United Nations development system
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	(Office of the) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

Since early 2020, the West and Central Africa region has been impacted by the COVID-2019 pandemic. While the short-term impacts are already being felt most acutely by vulnerable groups, the longer-term, socioeconomic, development-related and humanitarian consequences are yet to be fully determined. These outcomes will continue to impact the needs of migrants and other populations on the move, communities and governments, and must therefore be fully reflected in the programming of IOM, which has already shifted in response. This regional strategy should therefore be read in light of these developments and will be reviewed periodically to ensure the necessary response to address ongoing and emerging impacts of the pandemic and other significant regional and global developments.

1.

INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

The West and Central Africa region is a vast and diverse socioeconomic and geopolitical landscape beset by myriad challenges but is also rich in opportunities. Migration – in all its forms – is a defining characteristic of this landscape, and as such, has immense potential in serving the well-being of people and societies across the region, for example, by enabling the exchange of ideas, facilitating intraregional and transregional mobility, catalysing economic growth and increased prosperity. Despite these benefits, the promise of well-managed migration and increased mobility within the region cannot be taken for granted. Countries face a range of structural and ad hoc challenges that threaten to undermine stability, security and development, potentially giving rise to further migration-related challenges. Notwithstanding, there also are opportunities to leverage migration as a solution to such issues while contributing to broader socioeconomic development.

The core values and principles of IOM are at the heart of its work. The Organization holds itself to high standards, guided by the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, including upholding human rights for all. Respect for the rights, dignity, empowerment and well-being of all migrants and (associated) communities remains paramount. IOM has always assisted governments in their effective implementation of international standards in its programming and will continue to do so. In addition to the values enshrined in the IOM Constitution, the Organization continues to adhere to the core United Nations values of integrity, professionalism, equality and respect for diversity, ensures that it is accountable to its beneficiaries, and plays an active role in preventing sexual exploitation and abuse.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. Therefore, the IOM Regional Office for West and Central Africa[1] has defined three regional strategic objectives for the 2020–2024 period based on the three pillars of the IOM Strategic Vision (2019–2023). These objectives are mutually reinforcing and indicative of the Organization's ambition to be the driving force in the global conversation on migration. They respond to current and emerging challenges, positioning the Organization to better serve Member States and migrant populations throughout all stages of their journey across the West and Central Africa region and beyond. Furthermore, they are in line with the commitment of IOM to assist Member States in implementing intergovernmental commitments, such as the Global Compact for Migration, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Based on the IOM Strategic Vision and the IOM Continental Strategy for Africa, IOM in West and Central Africa will pursue the following objectives under the three pillars of resilience, mobility and governance.

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[1] IOM has an established presence in the West and Central Africa region, with country operations spanning from Mauritania on the northern edge of the region to the Republic of the Congo at its southern border. From Cabo Verde in the central Atlantic Ocean, along Africa's western coast, across the Sahel and to the eastern borders of Chad and the Central African Republic, IOM has consolidated country programmes supporting 23 Member States and migrant populations across a variety of geopolitical, socioeconomic and environmental contexts. Including the Regional Office based in Dakar, Senegal, IOM employs some 1,654 staff in the region and conducts operations from 19 country offices.

(a) Resilience. Enhance the resilience and protection of migrants, displaced persons and communities by addressing underlying vulnerabilities and drivers of irregular migration and displacement, ensuring timely and adequate support, and reinforcing the capacities of these groups to identify, cultivate and leverage means to assure their enhanced resilience.

(b) Mobility. Contribute to African economic and social integration through the promotion of policies and protocols for the free and voluntary movement of people, supporting national authorities, regional entities, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders with the requisite expertise, tools, technology and partnerships to achieve safe, orderly and regular migration.

(c) Governance. Foster cooperative, informed and robust migration governance across the region, in partnership with a broader range of stakeholders to build capacity, promote policy coherence and synergize operational efforts towards achievement of improved migration management.

Following a year-long period of internal consultations, IOM Regional Strategy for West and Central Africa 2020–2024 reflects needs and priorities based on a landscape assessment of what the next four years will bring and how IOM in the region needs to develop to meet new and emerging responsibilities.

2.

POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL OUTLOOK FOR THE REGION

2. POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL OUTLOOK FOR THE REGION

IOM, through its considerable geographic and thematic presence[2] and a network of partners at the national, regional and supranational levels, supports a diverse range of beneficiaries through either adequate direct assistance (in the case of individual beneficiaries)[3] or expertise (in the case of government agencies and institutions), and via established forums and platforms, shaping policy and contributing to advocacy. In engaging with beneficiaries, IOM programmes work to ensure that principles such as non-discrimination, equality and respect for diversity are upheld and strengthened. IOM strives to ensure that its interventions, to the extent possible, are planned in coordination with all target gender and age groups to make sure that actions will be relevant and beneficial to all.

The ongoing United Nations Reform and new developments in the region will present new opportunities and challenges. IOM can contribute to the creation of common platforms for engagement and shaping how migration is reflected in key development strategies, such as United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs) and Common Country Assessments. It will play an increasingly critical role in coordinating and giving direction on rights-based migration policy and programming across a range of policies and within regional forums.

As recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and promoted in the Organization's institution-wide approach on Migration and Sustainable Development,[4] human mobility is inextricably linked with sustainable development. As a member of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), IOM has a clear responsibility to articulate its activities and mandate in relation to the 2030 Agenda, to report on its activities to support Member States in achieving their commitments, and to contribute to regional discussions on migration and sustainable development. The active engagement of IOM in the United Nations development system (UNDS) in the region will be pivotal and hinges on building stronger partnerships within the United Nations system and beyond.

Fulfilling its mandate as the designated Coordinator and Secretariat of the United Nations Network on Migration (also, "United Nations Migration Network"), at the global level, IOM is spearheading the efforts of 38 United Nations entities in establishing country-level United Nations Migration Networks ("National Networks on Migration"). To this end, the global Network is developing guidance as to how these can best be developed in line with UNDS reforms and with the principal aim of ensuring effective United Nations system support in implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, including follow-up and review in accordance with the Global Compact's guiding principles.

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[2]   The Organization's operations and thematic focus represent the full spectrum of its global activities, including: (a) movement, pre-departure orientation and resettlement; (b) emergency preparedness, prevention and response; (c) post-crisis transition and recovery, including peacebuilding; (d) migration health, including health assessments, mental health and psychosocial support; (e) labour mobility and human development; (f) migrant assistance and protection, counter-trafficking, assistance to vulnerable migrants, and assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR); (g) migration and border management; (h) migration policy, research, cooperation and partnership; and (i) migration, environment and climate change.

[3]   Beneficiaries include international migrants, internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, returnees and host communities, among others.

[4]   IOM, *IOM Strategy on Migration and Sustainable Development* (Geneva, 2019). Available at https://publications.iom.int/books/iom-institutional-strategy-migration-and-sustainable-development.

Migration Networks at the country level are essential platforms for providing a coherent United Nations response to help address countries' migration priorities in support of the implementation, follow-up and review of the Global Compact for Migration. Currently, such structures are being established or reinforced in several locations. Building on the 13 country-level Networks already established in the region,[5] the Organization's continued leadership will be instrumental in ensuring that further Member States leverage these forums in their efforts to implement the Global Compact, strengthening the protection and security of migrants, enhancing diasporas' contribution to national development and contributing to countries' strategic positioning on migration issues through the implementation of effective governance policies. In addition to country-level Networks on Migration, a Regional United Nations Network on Migration was established in June 2019. The Regional Network will have a key role in supporting the review processes of the Global Compact that started in 2020.

The 2030 Agenda, the Global Compact for Migration, the African Union's 2063 Agenda and other relevant African Union frameworks and conventions will constitute the broad framework for the Organization's work, at both the regional and country levels, in setting specific priorities and addressing challenges within the region through targeted programming and by nurturing strategic partnerships. The following five strategic priorities of Member States and regional bodies closely related to migration have been identified[6] and are likely to shape major migration drivers and trends:

(a) Transformative inclusive economic growth, including urbanization and youth empowerment;[7]

(b) Regional socioeconomic integration;

(c) Governance, peace and security and rule of law;

(d) Resilience to climate change and natural resource management;

(e) Human development and social services, including health and education.

In addition, there are a number of cross-cutting priorities for governments, such as gender equality, human rights and data management. The work of IOM in the region will leverage its mandate on migration towards these government priorities.

To address the challenges identified by governments with an impact on migrant populations more comprehensively, IOM will enhance strategic collaboration with a range of United Nations partners, international organizations and country-level institutional interlocutors, both by strengthening existing partnerships and by forging new cooperative arrangements with a range of actors.[8]

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[5] As of October 2020, country-level Migration Networks have been established or are in the process of being initiated in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria and Senegal.

[6] An analysis was made of national development plans, national strategic frameworks, and the endorsed UNSDCFs of Member States in the region, as well as similar planning documents from the African Union, such as the African Union's Three-Year Implementation Plan of Action for the Global Compact for Migration in Africa (2020–2022), and from Regional Economic Commissions.

[7] IOM supports the United Nations Youth Strategy and helps Member States and partners to establish and support inclusive, representative, democratic and structured dialogue and consultation platforms for young people's contribution to peace, security and humanitarian actions. IOM also assists Member States and other partners to advocate for access to basic services for all youth, as well as building capacity through access to education and employment, as outlined in the Youth Strategy.

[8] This includes existing and new national institutional counterparts, civil society organizations (CSOs), academia, the private sector and donors.

3.

MIGRATION OUTLOOK FOR THE REGION

3. MIGRATION OUTLOOK FOR THE REGION

The West and Central Africa region exhibits varied migration patterns and flows driven by a multitude of interconnected drivers. Intraregional migration is a predominant characteristic across the region, while irregular migration remains prevalent, and instability and conflict continue to precipitate mass displacement within countries and across borders. At the same time, rapid population growth, environmental change, natural resource depletion, and an increase in the frequency and intensity of disasters aggravated by climate change are accelerating urbanization and spurring survival migration. These risks and vulnerabilities subsequently intersect to render rural livelihoods untenable and some geographic areas largely uninhabitable. In this context, internal and intraregional inequalities further impact migration dynamics. Human mobility characteristics in this region expose people on the move to health hazards and increased vulnerability to ill health, which might result in increased morbidity and mortality. Furthermore, the region's demographic dividend and the increasing feminization of migration are expected to present challenges and opportunities in addressing migration management and essential access to sexual reproductive health by migrants in the coming years.

Making reliable migration data available presents a key challenge to supporting State- and regional-level decision-making. Wide and porous borders, weak capacities to register entry to and exit from national territories, as well as the nature, diversity and complexity of certain migration flows contribute to this data challenge. While there are significant data deficits on movement, and accurate migration figures are difficult to ascertain, there are estimated to be some 9.5 million migrants across the region, an estimated 82 per cent originating in the region. Côte d'Ivoire hosts the highest number of migrants (estimated at 2.5 million), followed by Nigeria (1.2 million) and Burkina Faso (718,000).[9] Lack of data disaggregated by migration status in health information systems, and inadequate research on migration health represent further challenges to monitoring the health profile of migrants and epidemiological trends.

Intraregional mobility mainly takes place along one main east–west axis and is then distributed north- and southwards through other routes. Facilitated by visa-free movement agreements among members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and strong networks among ethnic groups, environmental and economic factors have been identified as important drivers of intraregional migration, with labour mobility being the largest one. Seasonal, temporary and permanent migrant workers typically move westward in pursuit of livelihood opportunities, with a significant proportion of labour migrants active in low-skilled sectors, including domestic work, informal trade and agriculture. Periods of intensified mobility coincide with seasonal harvests. Cross-border transhumance and nomadic movements or caravans also account for a large proportion of movements in the region. However, while migration route trends constantly evolve according to shifts in national policies and migration controls, routes remain relatively stable over time.

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[9]   United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), International migrant stock 2019, database. Available at www. un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates19.asp.

Despite the existence of free movement agreements designed to facilitate migration and reduce irregularity, irregular migration remains prevalent, and both smuggling and trafficking across several Member States are significant concerns.[10] A lack of identity documents among citizens of some ECOWAS countries has contributed to irregular movements within the region and beyond, allowing smuggling and exploitation despite relevant protocols.[11] Deeper research on exploitation and abuse linked to unethical recruitment practices within ECOWAS countries is needed, and strengthening the control of recruitment practices is increasingly viewed as a priority by national governments and regional bodies.

Porous borders, insecurity and governance deficits within several ECOWAS countries continue to present challenges in ensuring safe and orderly migration. Weak border management facilitates transnational crime, fuelling insecurity and undermining economic growth and stability. The presence of extremist groups along borders, such as in the Niger, has hampered effective border management. There is now growing recognition by policymakers across the region that effective border management needs to strike a balance between facilitating legitimate movements of trade and travellers and instituting controls to identify and prevent cross-border criminality and threats.

The Sahel, Lake Chad and Gulf of Guinea regions, and the Central African Republic are facing severe protection crises while recurrent attacks and ensuing security measures have restricted free movement. Farming, trade, transhumance and other activities have been significantly affected, depriving millions of people of their means of survival and disrupting access to basic services.

These crises are driven by political and economic marginalization, poor governance and insecurity, and have been exacerbated by deepening poverty, environmental degradation and climate change, unmitigated competition over scarce natural resources, and rapid population growth. All these factors continue to contribute to forced migration and displacement, with an estimated 6.3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs)[12] and 1.3 million refugees across the region.[13]

To address these factors, conflict-sensitive approaches and integrated programme responses are needed. Religious and ethnic tensions are significant dimensions of instability within certain contexts, though often deeply rooted in competition over natural resources. The proliferation and expansion of extremist groups, as well as the specific demographic profile of their members – largely disenfranchised youth – are priority challenges to be addressed in cooperation with relevant national and local authorities.

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[10]   IOM, *World Migration Report 2020* (2019, Geneva). Available at https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2020.

[11]   It is important to emphasize that most West Africans who are smuggled overland begin their journeys as regular migrants under the free movement protocol and only violate immigration laws after exiting the ECOWAS area. (IOM, *World Migration Report 2020*).

[12]   Displacement figures are taken from data made available by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre and the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) for 2019 and 2020. (IOM, Liptako–Gourma crisis monthly dashboard 7, 22 July 2020. Available at https://displacement.iom.int/reports/west-and-central-africa-%E2%80%94-liptako-gourma-crisis-monthly-dashboard-7-22-july-2020?close=true; IOM, Lake Chad basin crisis monthly dashboard 22, 21 July 2020, available at https://displacement.iom.int/reports/west-and-central-africa-%E2%80%94-lake-chad-basin-crisis-monthly-dashboard-22-21-july-2020?close=true; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), Global Internal Displacement Centre: 2019 internal displacement figures by country, available at www.internal-displacement.org/database/displacement-data.)

[13]   United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Global Report 2019* (Geneva, 2019), available at https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/gr2019/pdf/GR2019_English_Full_lowres.pdf#_ga=2.164147004.2047083052.1595424318-688284109.1583231394; UNHCR, Update on UNHCR's operations in West and Central Africa, 24 February 2020, available at www.unhcr.org/5e6a31e07.

Irregular migration to adjacent regions and beyond, including to Europe via Mediterranean routes, is an acknowledged challenge that will require closer collaboration of IOM regional offices across the continent and the cooperation of concerned Member States. Arrivals to Europe decreased significantly in 2018 and 2019, while Spain remained the primary arrival country for migrants taking the Western African and Western Mediterranean routes.[14]

Significant numbers of migrants in need of protection and return assistance are found in Libya, the Niger, Mali, Mauritania and Burkina Faso; between 2017 and 2018, some 65,000 stranded migrants were supported by IOM with their return to their countries of origin.[15] Cooperation is required to address drivers motivating such perilous journeys, identify opportunities for alternatives, and inform measures to curb illegal activities. At a time when the European Union is reviewing its partnership with Africa, there is a unique opportunity to broaden the scope of future European Union–Africa cooperation on migration and mobility, migrant protection and reintegration by contributing to policy development within the European Union and the African Union, and by advocating for a broadened migration governance outlook for European Union engagement with African countries. This should build on the results of and lessons learned through the European Union–IOM Joint Initiative and aim to enhance partnership addressing priorities of mutual interest.

Environmental degradation and climate change are impacting human mobility across the region. The World Bank estimates that, if no action is undertaken, there will be 86 million internal climate migrants in Africa by 2050.[16] Unpredictable push and pull factors are emerging at the same time as the number of aspiring migrants is increasing due to other factors. Weather patterns are becoming more unpredictable and extreme events more intense, contributing to an increase in disaster displacement in several countries and across wider areas. Beyond being a region particularly vulnerable to sudden-onset events, such as floods, West and Central Africa is also exposed to land degradation, water scarcity and coastal erosion.

Compared to global trends, the region is also expected to be most impacted by urbanization in the next decade, especially in coastal areas, which contribute to 56 per cent of the region's GDP and host one third of its inhabitants.[17] Intraregional labour mobility within natural resource dependent sectors (agriculture, mining and fisheries) is a key trend within the region. The environmental pull factors for migration and specific protection needs of migrant workers and host communities, including in upholding environmental rights, are generally underestimated. The need to address climate resilience is becoming more pronounced in several areas, including the Sahel, where climate change has contributed to a loss of rural livelihoods, including transhumance, accelerated urbanization, instability and conflict. As such, in programming to prevent conflict and to strengthen resilience, IOM will focus on "green" jobs, natural resource management and human mobility governance, especially at the local level.

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[14] Men comprise 91 per cent of migrants originating from the region attempting to reach Europe, with 67 per cent of the overall caseload are migrating in search of employment. The average age of Europe-bound migrants is slightly lower than those traveling to North Africa or within the West and Central Africa region (26.6 years old). On average, more Europe-bound migrants are single (86%), with relatively higher levels of education (61% with secondary level education, as opposed to 42% among migrants to North Africa and within the region). (IOM, Mixed migration flows to Europe 2019. Available at https://migration.iom.int/europe?type=arrivals.)

[15] Countries of origin include Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, the Niger and Côte d'Ivoire, among others. (IOM, *Assistance to Voluntary Return and Reintegration: Profiles of Migrants Assisted to Return to Their Country of Origin – West and Central Africa* (Geneva, 2020). Available at https://returnandreintegration.iom.int/en/resources/report/assistance-voluntary-and-humanitarian-return-20172019-profiles-migrants-assisted.)

[16] World Bank, *Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration* (Washington, D.C., 2018). Available at https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/29461.

[17] World Bank, *The Cost of Coastal Zone Degradation in West Africa: Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Togo* (Washington, D.C., 2019). Available at http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/822421552504665834/pdf/The-Cost-of-Coastal-Zone-Degradation-in-West-Africa-Benin-Cote-dIvoire-Senegal-and-Togo.pdf.

While migration is one strategy to increase livelihoods and manage risks posed by unmitigated environmental degradation and climate change, more data and evidence are needed to inform sound policymaking and to increase the resilience and adaptive capacities of communities. Policymakers in the region are generally sensitized to the environmental dimension of human mobility, but an important policy gap in addressing climate resilience, human mobility and environmental issues remains and needs to be addressed through intersectoral policy coherence and improved dialogue with partners.

Global health security remains a priority in this region, given the inadequate International Health Regulations (IHR) core capacities to prevent, detect and control public health emergencies of international concern and to response to outbreaks. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided further evidence on the urgency to enhance cross-border health and assist Member States in enhancing technical capacity to prepare and respond to outbreaks and epidemics. In addition to cross-border health issues, while malaria remains the leading cause of death, the threat of more virulent and particularly deadly epidemic diseases, such as cholera, meningitis and tuberculosis, has been present in several countries and subregions for decades. The Ebola epidemic in West Africa was unprecedented in terms of the number of cases and deaths, not to mention its geographic distribution.

As the impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic continue to unfold, the imperative to strengthen countries' preparedness and enhance cooperation in addressing public health crises within and across borders has become self-evident, along with the need to integrate migration into the broader socioeconomic response and recovery for improving health and wider development outcomes for migrants and their families and wider communities. It is similarly necessary to ensure that relevant national policies, plans, strategies, protocols, regulations and support mechanisms are in place to enable the protection of and access to affordable and quality health care for all affected people, regardless of status.

Additionally, maternal and child mortality rates remain high in the region, and sexual reproductive health issues are of critical relevance. According to a report for West Africa by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA),[18] the use of sexual and reproductive health services is generally low in the region, and even lower among adolescents, married or unmarried. Still, according to UNFPA, new HIV infections are still high and, in 2015, 64 per cent of new HIV infections in the West and Central Africa region were among 15–24-year-old women. In 2016, UNAIDS identified Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali and Nigeria as "fast-track countries", where HIV responses for young women should be prioritized. It is known that migrants and mobile women are at even higher risk of engaging in HIV-risk behaviour, as likewise stated by UNAIDS in its 2014 GAP Report 2014,[19] which declared mobile populations a key group for HIV.

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[18] UNFPA, *Adolescents and Youth Report: West and Central Africa* (Dakar, 2018). Available at https://wcaro.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA-WCARO-YOUTH-EN-WEB.pdf.
[19] UNAIDS, *The GAP Report* (Geneva, 2014). Available at www.unaids.org/en/resources/campaigns/2014/2014gapreport/gapreport.

Belonging to the world's youngest continent, African youth constitute a larger part of the population than anywhere else on the planet. In the West and Central Africa region, for example, 32 per cent of the population is between the ages of 10 and 24, compared to 24 per cent globally. As such, countries across the region will witness a demographic dividend characterized by rapid economic growth because of demographic transition characterized by shifting fertility and mortality rates and an increase in the size of the working population. While accelerated economic growth driven by a youth dividend represents a tremendous opportunity for societies across the region, coordinated efforts are required from across multiple sectors and levels of governance to reap such benefits.

The tremendous contribution that the youth can make is contingent upon their rights being protected and investments being made in their education, employment, health, empowerment and effective civic participation. There are significant challenges to the youth's ability to access higher education, employment, health and participation in decision-making processes, with disparities accentuated along gender and urban–rural divides. Such challenges are significant drivers of internal and international migration, and despite the promise of an improved socioeconomic future, a sense of hopelessness and the lack of opportunities are expected to continue to give rise to disenfranchisement and extremism.

Across West and Central Africa, norms and perceptions regarding the ability and acceptability of women to migrate vary, and narratives around women as victims of migration and human trafficking have somewhat contributed to obscuring the significance of voluntary migration undertaken by women across the region. Women and girls comprise 37 per cent of migrants in the region,[20] of whom the vast majority are migrant workers. The increasing feminization of labour migration reveals a shift in gender roles in society – as women increasingly migrate further afield, to North Africa and Europe, in search of employment opportunities, primarily in informal economic sectors such as domestic work, agriculture and retail. While employment predominates as a motivation to migrate among women, educational opportunities, marriage and family reunification, physical security, prospects for children, and an escape from situations of domestic abuse and oppressive social norms are also important factors.[21]

There are particular vulnerabilities of migrant women and girls, who are thus more exposed to certain risks while migrating: migrant women and girls may be more likely to be denied appropriate travel documents, making them more prone to experiencing increased levels of sexual exploitation and gender discrimination in host countries on the basis of both their gender and of being migrants. Structural inequalities, such as lower levels of education, less disposable income (or financial means, in general) and perceived lack of agency impact migrant women and girls disproportionately more and limit employment options that they may be qualified or considered for. Additionally, power dynamics rooted in gender inequality render migrant women and girls more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. During migration, women are also more vulnerable to ill health, particularly in humanitarian settings. According to UNFPA, 507 maternal deaths take place every day in emergencies and fragile settings.[22]

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[20] UN DESA, International migrant stock 2019, data set (see footnote 9).
[21] International Labour Organization (ILO), "Women migrant workers' labour market situation in West Africa", report (Geneva, 2020). Available at www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_751538.pdf.
[22] UNFPA, The State of World Population Report 2015 (Geneva, 2015). Available at www.unfpa.org/swop-2015.

4.
REGIONAL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

4. REGIONAL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

IOM in the West and Central Africa region will pursue six regional strategic priorities to advance migration management across the dimensions of resilience, mobility and governance.[23]

IOM is a strong operational partner[24] supporting Member States and the humanitarian community with timely, adequate and context-appropriate responses to the urgent lifesaving needs of all migrants, including vulnerable migrants and IDP populations. IOM prioritizes saving lives and safeguarding access to rights, protection and critical basic services for IDPs, affected host communities and migrants in this region. To this end, IOM will enhance protection activities along migration routes, with specific emphasis on assisting unaccompanied and separated children.

Addressing the urgent needs of the region's 6.3 million IDPs will remain a primary focus, and efforts will be made to ensure that relief operations continue to reach the most vulnerable, including children and victims of gender-based violence, and those who suffer from recurrent displacement. IOM support for humanitarian operations in various contexts across the region will be coordinated with relevant actors as before; where appropriate, the Organization will seek to increase leadership for response within key sectors, such as camp coordination and camp management.

4.1. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AND RESILIENCE

4.1.1. Strategic priority 1: Pursue robust collective outcomes across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus[25]

IOM programming across West and Central Africa must account for the evolving mix of drivers of irregular migration and displacement, with an emphasis on pre-empting emergencies resulting from instability and conflict derived from uneven socioeconomic development, impaired environmental services and eroding natural resource bases, as well as deficits in governance and delivery of essential services that contribute to marginalization and fuel violent extremism. With this in mind, programming will seek to better coordinate and harmonize interventions to catalyse collective outcomes for relief, development and peace.

Being able to provide humanitarian relief has become a necessity, while at the same time designing and implementing actions that will deliver sustainable outcomes for country operations to develop a longer-term vision, mapping resource requirements and working closely with governments. The Organization's extensive operational presence and deep knowledge of local issues – both in humanitarian and development settings, such as

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[23] These dimensions correspond to the pillars described in the IOM Strategic Vision. The IOM Strategic Results Framework (SRF) and its four objectives – humanitarian response and resilience (SRF Objectives 1 and 2), mobility (SRF Objective 3) and governance (SRF Objective 4) – capture the areas highlighted in the Strategic Vision. The strategic priorities in this regional strategy will be tackled through coordinated cross-thematic approaches to contribute to the broader regional goals.

[24] As a frontline humanitarian actor, IOM fulfils a critical function in providing, among others, shelter, non-food items, water, sanitation and hygiene, health, protection, and camp coordination and camp management (CCCM) support to vulnerable populations along migration routes and in volatile contexts characterized by disasters, violence and insecurity.

[25] Linked to SRF Objectives 1 and 2.

pastoralism and ethno-religious and political fissures – in countries across the region; its strong relations with local and national authorities; and its strategic partnerships with a broad range of relief, development and environmental actors, will be instrumental in designing and implementing more holistic, joined-up and forward-looking programming for more resilient, peaceful, prosperous and inclusive communities and societies. This approach will allow to mitigate risks, reduce vulnerabilities in crises and thereby contribute towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

4.1.2. Strategic priority 2: Build community resilience (including through sustainable reintegration), and protect and empower migrants, returnees and displaced persons in areas of origin, transit and destination and during displacement[26]

IOM will cooperate within and beyond the region to ensure that support to target populations is context-appropriate and addresses underlying causes of irregular migration and drivers of displacement. Acknowledging the compounded effects of mounting environmental pressures and hazards related to climate change, the impacts of instability and active conflict, and diminished social protection, not to mention the complex constellation of socioeconomic push and pull factors within country and regional contexts, IOM will design and implement programmes that are context-specific, leveraging its vast competencies across the Organization. Programmes will seek to address the drivers of displacement, as well as the adverse drivers of migration while harnessing its development potential.

IOM enables migrants deciding to return to and reintegrate into their countries of origin to do so in a safe, dignified and sustainable way, in full respect of international human rights standards and the principle of non-refoulement. Hence, continued facilitation of assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) support shall afford migrants safe pathways towards a sustainable and dignified future in their countries of origin.

To reduce adverse drivers of migration, IOM will further support governments' climate change preparedness efforts, deliver proven community resilience strategies in relevant contexts, and, where warranted, promote innovative approaches to assistance delivery, capitalizing on a wealth of data and range of digital solutions to better design and deliver interventions. New technology shall be deployed in support of protection, counter-trafficking and border management objectives, while advancements in energy and communications will be tapped to reinforce sustainable and accountable programming to affected populations. Such accountability shall acknowledge and accommodate gender-related risks and vulnerabilities and will be pursued through a rights-based approach when addressing the needs of mobile populations regardless of status (regular versus irregular). Support for developing coherent migration, environment and climate change strategies and action plans will also be provided to prepare States and communities for environmental and climate migration.

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[26] Linked to SRF Objective 2.

4.2. MOBILITY

4.2.1. Strategic priority 3: Promote safe and regular labour migration and its contributions to sustainable development outcomes[27]

Recognized as one of the primary factors contributing to migration dynamics within and beyond the region, the prospect of employment and livelihoods is bringing people, businesses and governments closer together, prompting innovative initiatives for regional socioeconomic integration that have the potential to drive continental transformation. Human capital and the potential of the region's youth represent both opportunities and challenges to enabling inclusive economic growth, social cohesion, and increased peace, stability and prosperity, as well as climate change adaptation across the region.

Improved economic security, dignity and social stability for youth and their communities is pivotal to addressing disenfranchisement and the spread of violent extremism and engagement in terrorist activities. The Organization's ongoing work in this area, including the elaboration of the West and Central Africa Youth Engagement Strategy, cooperation with Member States and capacity-building for partners in supporting peaceful transhumance, and its continued support of return and reintegration programming, particularly targeting youth, have already yielded positive contributions to societies and demonstrated the existence and value of a "demographic dividend" across several important contexts.

To build upon this work and further foster youth employment, enhance livelihood opportunities and support regional integration, IOM understands that expansion of opportunities for commerce and trade is necessary. In addition, as remittances represent a significant share of GDP in many West African countries, they should be leveraged for development. Therefore, integration of migration and human mobility into trade facilitation measures will be promoted to enhance regional integration and economic development. IOM is pursuing partnerships with the private sector and United Nations agencies, such as the International Labour Organization (under the Joint Labour Migration Programme for Africa) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (on durable solutions and work integration). In support of regional and continental ambitions to increase socioeconomic integration, enable the free movement of people and the significant contribution of remittances towards development, IOM will engage with governments to promote safe and regular migration by facilitating regular labour migration, strengthening free movement in the region, informing the design and implementation of relevant protocols, redoubling efforts to link national and regional development initiatives with migration policies and programmes, and promoting ethical recruitment practices. IOM will be positively influencing these trends through ongoing engagement with diaspora groups to support trade, inclusive economic growth and sustainable development; its partnerships with the private sector and United Nations agencies to address job inclusion in emerging sectors, such as the "green economy"; and its expertise in navigating and shaping legal channels and policy harmonization for labour migration.

Broader and deeper partnership with national authorities, the private sector and diaspora populations shall be pursued, with the aim of engendering collaboration for better-informed policies, enhanced service delivery, and more equitable and durable migration management outcomes.

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[27] Linked to SRF Objective 2.

4.2.2. Strategic priority 4: Improve access to critical health services and support the management of communicable diseases

In supporting continental and global health and security initiatives, such as the Global Health Security Agenda, IOM will seek to cooperate with national authorities, service providers, civil society organizations (CSOs), professional associations and other relevant actors, including international partners specializing in health, to enhance prevention and response capacity. With regard to the IHR, particular focus will be on enhancing the capacity at land-border points of entry (PoEs) where epidemic-prone diseases have been witnessed to disproportionately impact mobile and migrant populations. Health surveillance at PoEs is among IHR core capacities that Member States need to assure to prepare and respond to outbreaks and public health emergencies of international concern such as Ebola and COVID-19. IOM has developed the Health Border Mobility Management Framework to assist Member States in this respect. The framework, which was successfully implemented during the Ebola and COVID response, implies the expansion of the concept of PoEs to a broader mobility continuum and border space to capture irregular movements of people through unofficial land border crossings. During the COVID-19 response, IOM was nominated as the lead agency for PoE coordination and had implemented direct assistance to port health units on COVID-19 screening, risk communications and training, among others. To this end, IOM will continuously build capacity at the national and regional levels to support public health emergency planning. Through country-level programming, national health systems will be strengthened; critical human resources will be made available through diaspora skills transfer; and identification and treatment of prevalent communicable diseases, such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, will be supported. In addition, IOM will continue to provide primary health-care services, assuring non-discriminatory and free access for vulnerable migrants, especially to life-saving health intervention in affected communities.

Advocating for and supporting Member States in ensuring migrant, displaced and host community populations have access to health services, regardless of status, shall remain a priority in line with the principle of universal health coverage and the Global Compact for Migration (Objective 15: "Provide access to basic services for migrants"). Efforts will be made to integrate reflection on and relevant provisions to address human mobility patterns identified within the region, thus ensuring that standards and policies are relevant across a broad spectrum of migration realities. Beyond supporting national partners in responding to the physical health needs of migrant populations, IOM programmes in the region will seek to support better access to mental health and psychosocial support for migrants and crisis-affected populations. Across the region, IOM will continue to support Member States in ensuring crisis-affected populations are able to access primary and emergency health care and continued care and treatment, both during and after crises.

Acknowledging that good health policy pivots on a strong evidence base, IOM will redouble efforts to collect relevant data and undertake analysis on the health issues faced by various categories of migrants and displaced populations. These analyses will then inform programmatic approaches and be incorporated into targeted advocacy, in full respect of privacy and data protection of individuals.

IOM remains cognizant of the particular physical, mental and psychosocial vulnerabilities of different gender and age groups, and the specific barriers that may influence their ability to access and benefit from available services. In all aspects of its operations, and with particular emphasis on the delivery of health programming across the region, IOM will maintain a principled, rights-based approach that encompasses respect for diversity and gender equality.

4.3. GOVERNANCE

4.3.1. Strategic priority 5: Support improvement in the availability, quality and utilization of migration data within evidence-based policy formulation across relevant sectors

In continuing to drive the global conversation on migration and ensuring that the opportunities, challenges and perspectives of the West and Central Africa region factor into this dialogue, IOM will lead efforts towards improving the availability, quality and utilization of migration data to inform country- and regional-level decision-making. Efforts will go well beyond consolidating and harmonizing data, emphasizing the commitment of IOM to be a learning organization that can offer principled support and capacity-building to national statistics offices, governments and regional entities to collect, consolidate, analyse and utilize migration data for their own decision-making. By emphasizing the use of quality data, IOM can be the objective voice on behalf of migrants and displaced populations.

IOM will address data capacities, analysis and research gaps across the spectrum of migration-related issues and within specific country and subregional contexts, in line with the IOM Migration Data Strategy, by strengthening and improving the use of existing tools (e.g. the Regional Data Hub (RDH), the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and the IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC)), to respond effectively to changing situations. The Organization will undertake thematic surveys and studies to advance knowledge of emerging issues and their impact on migration and its drivers, including conflict, violence, disasters, climate change and environmental degradation, as well as the various migration routes and pathways, such as transhumance corridors and the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol. IOM will continue to forge strategic partnerships to amplify the scope and potential impact of improved data and knowledge management. Specific focus on enhancing collection of data on displaced populations and returnees to support more timely, appropriate and impactful relief response and recovery will require closer cooperation with national authorities across the region. Where warranted, IOM will seek to harness the power of big data, emerging technology, and traditional and local knowledge to collect, process, interpret and diffuse information for a range of target audiences. Its approach will be migrant-centred, participatory and, to the extent possible, anticipatory, ensuring that the issues impacting migrant and displaced populations reveal and contextualize the experiences of people through data. All data-related activities will continue to be implemented in full respect of privacy and data protection.

4.3.2. Strategic priority 6: Promote a better understanding of legal frameworks and the formulation of coherent regional, national and local migration policies aligned with development strategies, with a particular focus on the protection of migrants in situations of vulnerability

Working towards the objectives of the Global Compact for Migration and the 2030 Agenda, IOM will promote international legal frameworks and regional and national migration policies, convening stakeholders and facilitating dialogue to promote coherence across initiatives and commitments. IOM actively supports governments in developing and mainstreaming protection and human rights-based migration policies.[28] In upholding the rights of migrants, displaced persons and people on the move, IOM programming in West and Central Africa will promote a three-pronged approach to protection that engages (a) local authorities, (b) service providers and (c) operational partners in addressing the vulnerabilities of children, victims of trafficking and other groups in need of increased protection.

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[28] Policy areas include health, urbanization, education, employment, land tenure, climate change, and access to justice and durable solutions, among others.

Across the region, there is growing recognition that effective border management relies on striking the right balance between facilitation of regular movement of trade and travellers across borders and controlling borders to identify and prevent cross-border criminality and threats. As such, promotion of sustainable, predictable and cooperative economic growth within the region pivots on the establishment and implementation of more robust legal frameworks and coordinated national and intraregional migration policies. In pursuing this, IOM will work with a range of border agencies, including immigration, customs, police, health and other related agencies to enable safe and orderly migration in all its forms. In this context, IOM will prioritize support to progress in the promotion of legal identity (SDG Target 16.9).

In line with the IOM Continental Strategy for Africa, the Organization will pursue opportunities for renewed and strengthened cooperation with continental and regional partners and support national and local government institutions to promote better governance of African migration and foster inclusive and sustainable development across the continent. Cognizant of the entry into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in May 2019, IOM will continue to build its relationship with the African Union, ECOWAS and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and leverage regional forums and platforms in advancing dialogue, consensus and cooperation on migration issues. This will include the promotion of and support for inter-State consultation mechanisms on migration such as the Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA) and the Migration Dialogue for Central African States (MIDCAS). IOM will pursue engagement within such forums to collaborate with national governments in strengthening their capacities to cooperate across multiple levels and dimensions of governance, and to pursue key issues, such as the implementation of the African Union's Migration Policy Framework for African and Action Plan (2018–2030), and the Free Movement of Persons Protocol.

5.

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

5. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

5.1. POLICY CAPACITY AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Capacity for policy development pivots on strong knowledge management, a robust evidence base to facilitate analysis and a culture of continuous learning, adaptation and innovation. IOM strives for a stronger policy role, to increase its global coordination efforts and engagement with partners.

Knowledge management, identified as one of the "drivers of success" in the IOM Strategic Vision (2019–2023), begins with the ability to gather and manage accumulated knowledge, whether in the form of operational expertise, information on policy trends and developments, lessons learned from project implementation, or key (numeric) data.

There is a need to establish a coherent, systematic approach to managing existing knowledge. The following actions aim to enhance knowledge management in the region:

(a) Strengthen efforts to implement knowledge management initiatives, in line and coordinated with IOM Headquarters;

(b) Leverage the Organization's comparative operational and research advantage in data collection, and utilize this in informing evidence-based policies and programming;

(c) Enhance knowledge and drive innovation through application of data analysis;

(d) Build research and analysis collaboration with leading academics, the private sector, relevant CSOs and other agencies, with a focus on producing world-class innovative outputs;

(e) Develop the capacity, culture and internal infrastructure to share experiences and analyse developments, enabling communication and learning across regions in the Organization's official languages.

Such an approach will require clear ownership at the highest level, which can be expressed through the following actions:

(a) Allocating sufficient human and financial resources for implementing knowledge management efforts;

(b) Articulating the benefits of knowledge management and demonstrating the added value of improved institutional knowledge management practices;

(c) Increasing the communication and marketing of knowledge within and beyond the Organization.

5.2. MONITORING AND EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING

There is a strong focus on results-based management. A results-based approach requires robust monitoring and evaluation systems that provide government officials, IOM staff, partners, donors and CSOs with better means to inform decision-making, meet accountability obligations, draw lessons and inform evidence-based advocacy, and strategic communications.

Staff will therefore be provided with technical guidance, capacity-building initiatives and sound approaches to implement monitoring and evaluation systems. The Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Officer will work closely with country offices on initiatives and activities, in line with the Evaluation Policy and Monitoring Instruction and to ensure coordinated efforts.[29]

Emphasis will be put on supporting the measurement of progress against results-based indicators consistent with country office strategic needs and planning.

IOM will prioritize the formulation and implementation of the Accountability to Affected Populations Framework across the region, including through commitments of its leadership, information-sharing and transparency, participation, complaints and feedback mechanisms, and partner coordination.[30]

5.3. COMMUNICATIONS AND VISIBILITY

Enhancing the Organization's ability to strategically communicate the challenges, opportunities and broad benefits associated with efficient migration management will require improving communications and strengthening its institutional reputation.

In line with the ambition of IOM to lead the global discussion on migration, its communications and visibility efforts shall shape the migration discourse within the region. Through quality information and data, the Organization will ensure the production and dissemination of clear, consistent and policy-oriented key messages.[31]

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[29] The main areas of work will entail:
  (a) Undertaking measures to ensure that the Regional Office for West and Central Africa have a standardized approach to monitoring and evaluation, including by: maintaining a repository for monitoring and evaluation guidelines and tools; supporting offices and programmes in developing standard monitoring and evaluation systems; evaluating terms of reference and reviewing reports to ensure quality standards; efficiently coordinating and carrying out the regional-level evaluation work plan; and making regular updates and tracking and sharing tendencies on monitoring and evaluation efforts;
  (b) Utilizing monitoring and evaluation for accountability, organizational learning, and decision-making, including promotion of the use of evaluation tools and mechanisms; enhancement of monitoring products to contribute to evidence-based tracking; and open publication of evaluation reports on the Evaluation Webpage;
  (c) Increasing knowledge in and resources for monitoring and evaluation across the Organization, including: monitoring and evaluation training and capacity-building, communities of practices, monitoring and evaluation networks, monitoring and evaluation knowledge, and experience exchange;
  (d) Leveraging monitoring and evaluation outcomes within risk management strategies; affording country programmes better predictive capacity; using tools and data sources for forecasting within dynamic contexts; undertaking better-informed contingency planning; and enabling course correction across all facets of IOM operations.

[30] Within its ambition to ensure accountability to populations targeted and impacted by IOM programming in the region, the Organization commits to the principles of the Accountability to Affected Populations Framework and to wielding power responsibly by taking account of, giving account to and being held to account by the people that it seeks to assist. In carrying out its duty to ensure such accountability to people affected by its presence and programming, IOM remains cognizant of its responsibility to assure that the rights and dignity of populations are transparently upheld and safeguarded. To this end, IOM commits to ensuring the engagement of affected populations in decision-making processes and affording them channels to exercise their right to give feedback and access responses that are appropriate, adequate and inclusive.

[31] Emphasis will be placed on promoting accurate and balanced migration narratives, giving adequate space to migratory phenomena that are often neglected by the media, and mobilizing cooperative action in support of migrant-centred policies and programmes. To this end, efforts will focus on the development of harmonized messaging on critical issues, elaboration of audience-appropriate communications and visibility materials, application of corporate branding, and implementation of coherent strategies for dissemination. More consistent and targeted communication shall ensure that the work of IOM on the ground is amplified and stratified to maximum effect.

5.4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

IOM recognizes that its most valuable asset is its people. The Organization takes pride in diversity and recognizes the benefits that accrue within the workplace when there is gender balance and a diversity of backgrounds (including cultural backgrounds), age, ethnicities and religions reflecting the people it assists, as well as its Member States. IOM will strive to achieve this diversity, acknowledging that challenges remain, particularly with regard to gender balance.[32] Cultural barriers, hardships and security conditions remain the biggest obstacles to attracting qualified female candidates across all staff grades and categories in many countries where IOM operates in the region. Therefore, IOM continues to pursue a staff development strategy that strives for gender equality at all levels.[33]

IOM will continue to enhance capacity and professional development for all staff through relevant training, cross-departmental learning and investment in critical skills. The approach to staff development will focus on core business functions throughout project cycles.[34] Through a mix of training modalities, staff exchange and targeted learning, IOM staff will be better prepared to deliver within their roles, thus better serving the Organization, Member States and beneficiary populations.

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[32] Women account for 37 per cent of IOM employees in the region. However, despite a 6 percentage-point increase from 2016 to 2019 in women's representation in the workforce, significant efforts remain to be made in achieving equal representation.

[33] IOM will institute measures to ensure that female and single-parent staff are afforded equal opportunities to contribute to the Organization's work across the region and to advance in their careers while benefitting from adequate and equitable support that accommodates the specific needs of staff with child-rearing responsibilities.

[34] This includes project development, project management, monitoring and evaluation, data and information management, financial control, and strategic communications.

6.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT:
IOM IN THE REGION IN 2024

6. CONCLUDING STATEMENT: IOM IN THE REGION IN 2024

Seeking to address the multitude of migration challenges and opportunities present and emerging across the West and Central Africa region, IOM reaffirms its commitment to accountability towards migrant and displaced populations, host communities and communities of origin, as well as Member States. Through forward-looking actions, IOM will extend responsive, flexible and, most importantly, migrant-centred operations.
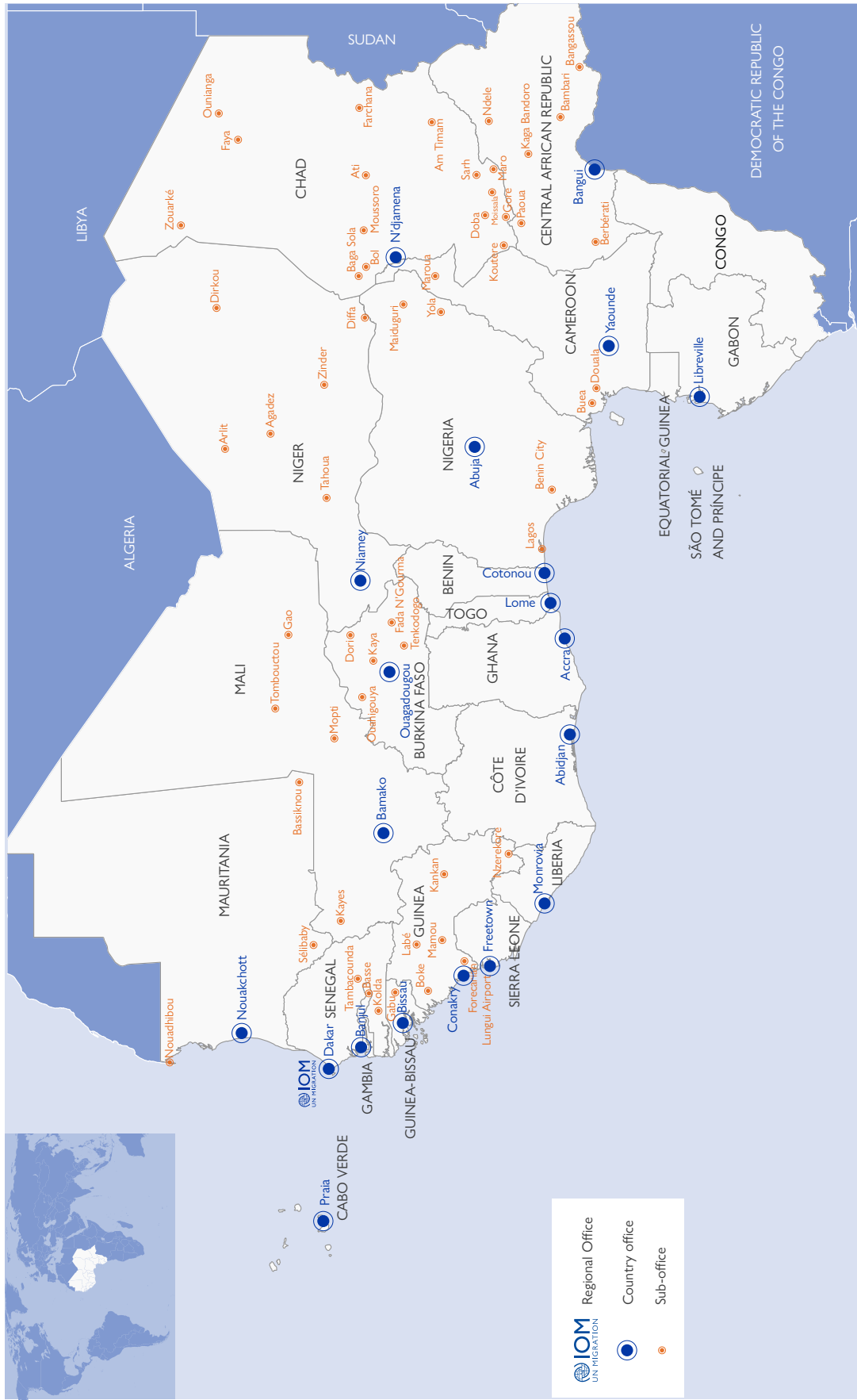
The SDGs will not be achieved without due consideration of migration. This will include, in particular, the impact of income inequalities on human mobility dynamics and the way in which migration and migrants themselves can contribute to reducing inequalities. The work of IOM highlights that migration can be a powerful driver of sustainable development for migrants and their communities in countries of origin, transit and destination. However, when migration policies or other relevant policies do not consider the needs of migrants or the effects of migration, migrants can be put at risk, communities can come under strain, and development gains can be jeopardized. To mitigate this and essentially maximize the development potential of migration, the Organization will support governments in the region to coordinate and evaluate both development-focused and migration-specific policy and actions to maximize the benefits of the migration–development nexus through a whole-of-government approach. IOM will support, during the Decade of Action,[35] this joined-up approach by supporting greater coherence and development impact – both in governments and within the Organization itself. In this vein, IOM will pursue joined-up approaches to deliver increasingly in the areas of labour migration, international border management, environment and climate programming, and humanitarian response in complex crises and their aftermath, with an expanded range of partners where additional impact can be achieved.

The Organization's longstanding partnerships with Member States, the United Nations system and other partners – both at an operational level and through advancing migration policies and governance frameworks – enable IOM to assume a more active role in leading the global conversation on migration across the region. In pursuing this aim, IOM is aware of its own institutional identity, the concrete contributions of its programmes and the imperative of leading by example in raising an objective voice in behalf of migrants.

New opportunities are often accompanied by increased expectations of the Organization and, as such, country programmes will be challenged to adapt – adjusting operations, expanding partnerships and changing internal and external perceptions of the role of IOM and its relevance within a number of contexts and forums. In line with its commitment to be a learning organization, IOM in West and Central Africa will seek to leverage lessons from across the Organization in navigating challenges and opportunities as they emerge. Guided by the principles that have facilitated the Organization's outreach across the region and globally – and thriving to be a driving force in improving migration management and sustainable development outcomes for everyone – IOM welcomes the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

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[35] United Nations General Assembly, draft resolution on Political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly (A/HLPF/2019/L.1) of 9 September 2019. Available at https://undocs.org/en/A/HLPF/2019/l.1.

ANNEX: IOM IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

SUDAN

LIBYA

CHAD

Ounianga

Faya

Zouarké

Dirkou

Farchana

Ati

Moussoro

Baga Sola

Bol

N'djamena

Diffa

Zinder

Maiduguri

Agadez

Arlit

Tahoua

NIGER

MALI

Gao

Tombouctou

Dori

Kaya

Mopti

Djibougou

Ouagadougou

Tenkodogo

Fada N'Gourma

BURKINA FASO

Niamey

BENIN

TOGO

GHANA

Bassiknou

Bamako

MAURITANIA

Kayes

Sélibaby

GUINEA

Kankan

Mamou

Labé

Boke

Kolda

Tambacounda

Basse

Kedugou

Bissau

GUINEA-BISSAU

Conakry

Forecariah

Lungui Airport

Freetown

SIERRA LEONE

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Nzerekore

Monrovia

LIBERIA

Abidjan

Accra

Lome

Cotonou

Lagos

Benin City

NIGERIA

Abuja

Yola

Maroua

Doba

Sarh

Moissala

Koutéré

Paoua

Bouar

Bambari

Bangassou

Ndele

Kaga Bandoro

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Bangui

Berbérati

CAMEROON

Yaounde

Douala

Buea

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Libreville

GABON

CONGO

SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

ALGERIA

Nouakchott

Nouadhibou

Dakar

SENEGAL

GAMBIA

Banjul

CABO VERDE

Praia

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