

Global Refugee Forum 2023

Joint Commitments by the MDB Coordination Platform on Economic Migration and Forced Displacement

On the occasion of the Global Refugee Forum (13-15 December 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland), we – a group of multilateral development banks (MDBs) comprising the African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Council of Europe Development Bank,¹ European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank and World Bank – reaffirm our commitment to promoting sustainable solutions for situations of economic migration and forced displacement (EMFD)² and to supporting the operationalisation of the Global Compact on Refugees by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Members and other relevant stakeholders.

We acknowledge that mobility is increasing, that fragility and conflict are on the rise, and that EMFD are in a mutually reinforcing relationship with other development themes and the result of multiple driving forces. In this context, and in line with our various mandates and regions of operation, we recognise the imperative for MDBs to continue supporting countries of origin, transit areas, host communities, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees and migrants in refugee-like situations through targeted financing, policy instruments and research.

We, the aforementioned MDBs, commit to continuing to work together through the MDB Coordination Platform on Economic Migration and Forced Displacement, launched in 2018. This platform seeks to enhance strategic dialogue and strengthen operational coordination and knowledge sharing to leverage our synergies and complementarities in the areas of EMFD.

We will endeavour to continue strengthening our partnership with strategic stakeholders, including but not limited to UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), on issues of common interest. We will continue to work to build a nexus between humanitarian assistance and development investments on displacement and migration-related challenges. Current strategic and operational partnerships have already created some promising precedents on which to scale up and expand.

On the occasion of the 2023 Global Refugee Forum, we reaffirm our commitment to expanding our coordination and deepening our cooperation with all relevant stakeholders in the MDB community, with member countries and relevant specialised organisations – notably, UNHCR, the IOM, civil society, the private sector and partners across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, to maximise our collective development impact.

Progress on MDB engagement on EMFD. Since 2019, MDBs have made progress on the four commitments set out in the 2019 Joint Statement:³

- **Stepping up the use of policy and financing instruments in the context of forced displacement**
All MDB Platform members have stepped up their policy and financing efforts in the context of forced displacement. This includes (i) direct financing for operations and technical cooperation projects benefitting host communities, refugees and IDPs; (ii) data collection and analytics, enabling the formulation of more effective policies and programmes in these contexts; and (iii) the development of dedicated strategies, approach papers and frameworks.
- **Enhancing coordination between MDBs and with external stakeholders**

¹ The Council of Europe Development Bank became member of the platform in 2022.

² Support from MDBs in these areas spans different groups, including migrants, refugees, IDPs, other people in refugee-like situations, returnees and hosting communities, according to our respective mandates.

³ https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/mdb_statement_at_grf_2019_final.pdf

Since its creation, the MDB Platform has provided a space for its members to come together on a regular basis to learn and share knowledge on EMFD. In addition, members of the platform have strengthened their coordination with other stakeholders, such as humanitarian and development actors, the private sector, regional coordination platforms and diaspora organisations.

- **Providing rapid financing to help alleviate strain on public services**

MDBs have demonstrated an ability to disburse rapid financing by different methods to support governments in times of crisis and shock. In low-income countries, some projects have (i) helped expand access to infrastructure and services for migrants, refugees, IDPs and host communities; (ii) improved environmental management in and around refugee settlements; (iii) enhanced access to documentation; (iv) improved access to education, health and economic opportunities; and (v) provided better inclusion of migrants and refugees in social safety-net programmes. In middle-income countries, some projects have helped mitigate the shocks caused by large influxes of migrants, refugees and IDPs.

- **Enhancing private-sector development and support**

MDBs have consistently highlighted the importance of increasing private-sector investments in situations of forced displacement and have engaged the private sector in their support. The MDB Platform has enhanced private-sector support through projects focused on financial inclusion, entrepreneurship, workforce capacity-building and employability, and economic development.

Lessons learnt. Through our enhanced and focused activities over the last four years, the MDBs have drawn several lessons, in line with our individual and common approaches. These lessons include the need to:

- **Tailor investments and ensure systems-wide coordination** to address the dynamic and complex development context of projects. These contexts, often linked to global challenges such as climate change and situations of conflict and fragility, mean that to achieve the desired impact, it is essential to address issues that may go beyond the scope of a single project, or even that of the MDB in question and the immediate project partners. Making progress on concrete, context-specific complementarities and synergies is critical. Working closely with local governments and community leaders to tailor interventions to the local cultural, social and economic contexts can lead to more sustainable and locally owned solutions.
- **Further calibrate diagnostic and analytical tools** to improve the targeting of displaced populations, their needs and vulnerabilities. This should be underpinned by enhanced data-collection systems that facilitate a shift towards preventative and durable solutions and approaches. It will also facilitate the development of strategic frameworks and policies (at subnational, national, regional and sectoral level) that address both the drivers and impacts of people movements in the context of fragility, conflict and climate change, including a focus on boosting gender equality and enhancing economic opportunities for youth. Promoting monitoring and evaluation frameworks is also key to improving performance management, capturing institutional learning and informing the development of engagement approaches that optimise outcomes.
- **Develop and/or mobilise financial instruments** tailored to specific realities and promote an integrated “financing architecture” to design interventions holistically. This integrated approach can entail various financial solutions, such as concessional loans/blending instruments, equity, guarantees, insurance products, technical assistance and cooperation. At the same time, flexible arrangements and innovative approaches to mobilising additional investments for conflict prevention, sustaining peace and climate adaptation at scale remain paramount.
- **Enhance partnerships** as a critical strategic approach to achieving MDBs’ investment objectives and supporting international efforts for more equitable responsibility sharing. Partnerships with public agencies, humanitarian partners that have complementary support and financing capabilities, civil

society and the private sector are necessary to realise these objectives. Inclusive stakeholder dialogue and national ownership remain critical to advancing conflict-sensitive, peace-positive investments and leaving no-one behind, while joint and/or coordinated policy engagement can ensure that development investment is leveraged effectively.

Joint MDB commitments. The MDBs reaffirm our collective and individual commitment to applying the principles of good practice outlined in the 2019 Joint Statement, as we endeavour to address the specific needs of vulnerable populations in development assistance. To this end, the MDBs have identified further priority areas for the MDB Coordination Platform on Economic Migration and Forced Displacement to focus on in the coming years:

- **promoting holistic and comprehensive approaches** to preventing and addressing irregular economic migration and forced displacement situations, supporting assisted or independent voluntary return to the country of origin, and reintegration, taking into consideration the specific needs and intersecting vulnerabilities of individual population segments, such as efforts to prioritise the gender dimensions of EMFD
- **advancing collaboration** among MDBs and other stakeholders to promote initiatives, projects and programmes that are complementary, create synergies and increase impact for both displacement prevention and solutions, while building on lessons from successful interventions that may be replicated in similar contexts
- **deepening coordination and cooperation on EMFD-related analytics and knowledge**, including through joint research and other products
- **improving monitoring and evaluation** to increase operational efficiency and effectiveness
- **exploring innovative financing mechanisms** to generate sustainable funding for EMFD projects.

To support the above work, the MDB Coordination Platform on Economic Migration and Forced Displacement will continue to work towards establishing streamlined mechanisms to facilitate cross-MDB knowledge sharing and operational exchanges, including through a series of papers on good practices and focused workshops. This approach ensures the continued evolution of MDBs' strategies in response to the dynamic challenges faced in EMFD contexts.