



Migration Governance Snapshot: the Republic of Uganda

May 2018

In 2015, IOM developed a [Migration Governance Framework \(MiGOF\)](#) to help countries define what “well-managed migration policy” might look like at the national level. The MiGOF was welcomed by IOM’s Member States in the same year. The Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) were developed to assist countries operationalize the MiGOF by using a standard set of approximately 90 indicators which could be applied across six key policy domains.

The MGI is a tool based on policy inputs, which offers insights on policy levers that countries can use to develop their migration governance. The MGI is not intended to function as a measurement of outcomes related to migration policies and institutions, instead it operates as an input-based benchmarking framework that offers insights on policy measures that countries can action to strengthen migration governance. The MGI is not meant to rank countries on the design or implementation of migration policies, but rather to be a framework to help countries in the assessment of the comprehensiveness of their migration policies, as well as to identify gaps and areas that could be strengthened. The MGI aims to assist countries when advancing the conversation on migration governance by clarifying what “well-governed migration” might look like in the context of the [SDG Target 10.7](#)

This country snapshot summarizes the well-governed areas of the Republic of Uganda’s (hereafter referred to as Uganda) migration governance structures, as well as the areas with potential for further development, as assessed by the MGI.¹

¹ The Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) initiative is a policy-benchmarking programme led by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and implemented with the support of the Economist Intelligence Unit. Funding is provided by the Government of Sweden.

The opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Sweden or the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the report do not imply expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

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Key findings

I. Adherence to international standards and fulfilment of migrants' rights

International conventions ratified

Convention name	Ratified
ILO Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97)	No
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	Yes (1976)
Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, 1954	Yes (1965)
Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, 1961	No
ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)	Yes (1978)
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989	Yes (1990)
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW), 1990	Yes (1995)

Migration Governance: examples of well-developed areas

Uganda has progressive policies to support the integration of refugees and asylum seekers. The [Refugees Act](#) ensures the freedom of movement for refugees within Uganda, and ensures access to social services including health care and education for both refugees and members of their families. Refugees have the right to self-employment under the same conditions as nationals, and upon registration, a piece of land is given to each refugee family for settlement and agricultural use.

Through provisions in the [Employment \(Recruitment of Ugandan Migrant Workers Abroad\) Regulations](#) and adherence to international conventions, Uganda has shown a strong commitment to family rights and reunification. The Guidelines on Recruitment and Placement of Ugandan Migrant Workers Abroad state that, for workers travelling outside Uganda for employment in another country, both nations shall facilitate the reunification of migrant workers and their families. The [Refugees Act](#) allows refugees to apply to the Refugee Eligibility Committee for permission for a family member to enter and reside in Uganda.

Uganda is a party to numerous international conventions and frameworks guarding the rights of migrants including: the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, Supplementary Provisions of the ILO Migrant Workers Convention, and the Conventions on Statelessness.

Areas with potential for further development

Ugandan laws and policies relating to migrant groups other than refugees or asylum seekers are rather fragmented. There is no comprehensive framework, law or migration policy that clearly establishes or defines the rights of such migrants in relation to access to public social services, including health care and education.

Uganda's [Citizenship and Immigration Control Act](#) sets out requirements for temporary legal residents to obtain permanent residence. Individuals who have legally and voluntarily migrated to Uganda are entitled to apply for citizenship provided they have lived in Uganda for at least 10 years. The path to citizenship for refugees is much longer; citizenship by naturalization for those with refugee status is granted only if they have resided in Uganda for an aggregate period of at least 20 years and intends to reside there permanently.

Refugees living in settlements can vote for representatives. These are administrative roles and are not integrated in the political system of the country.

The [National Social Security Fund Act](#) stipulates that entitlement to social security is contingent on employment rather than residency. Individuals must either have an employment contract in Uganda, or be an ordinary resident of Uganda working for a Ugandan employer. The [Second National Growth and Development Plan \(NDPII 2015/16-2019/20\)](#) noted that only approximately three per cent of the Ugandan population has access to formal social security.

2. Formulates policy using evidence and “whole-of-government” approach

Migration Governance: examples of well-developed areas

Uganda has a mature institutional framework and strong operational capacity to implement migration policy. The National Citizenship and Immigration Board and the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control (DCIC), within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, are responsible for border management, the issuance of visas, processing citizenship applications, and deportations. The Diaspora Services Department is the dedicated government agency responsible for engaging with the Ugandan diaspora. A formal horizontal interministerial coordination mechanism, the National Coordination Mechanism on Migration (NCM), was established in 2015 and is led by the Office of the Prime Minister. The NCM is comprised of key government agencies, international organizations, migration-related civil society organizations, and members of academia.

Regular migration and border policies are codified in Uganda’s [Immigration and Citizenship Control Act](#). Separate laws address internally displaced persons (The [National Policy for Internally Displaced People](#)), those facing forced migration to Uganda (The [Refugees Act](#) and the [Refugee Regulations](#)), human trafficking (The [Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act](#)), and Ugandans employed abroad ([The Employment \(Recruitment of Ugandan Migrant Workers Abroad\) Regulations](#)).

Uganda’s [Employment Act](#) promotes equal opportunities for migrant workers and members of their families who legally reside in Uganda, and several visas are available to foreign nationals wishing to invest or to seek employment in the country. Uganda is a member state of the East African Community (EAC) Common Market Protocol, which allows for the free movement of persons and labour across the borders of other member states.

Areas with potential for further development

The Government of Uganda is in the process of drafting a comprehensive National Migration Policy. Currently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is undertaking regional consultations with a wide range of actors including civil society. The Government has also developed a National Diaspora Policy, which is yet to be formally adopted.

The legislation currently governing migration in Uganda is fragmented and there is no comprehensive policy or framework driving migration governance, resulting in limited transparency in rules and regulations pertaining to emigration and immigration. Existing legislation focuses on the rights of Ugandan nationals working abroad and could be strengthened to address the rights of immigrants living in Uganda.

3. Engages with partners to address migration and related issues

Migration Governance: examples of well-developed areas

Uganda is a member of multilateral and regional partnerships including: The East African Community (EAC) and the EAC Common Market, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, and the

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which adopted a [Regional Migration Policy Framework](#) in 2012. In May 2017, Uganda hosted the third Pan African Forum on Migration, with the aim of compiling Africa's inputs for a Global Compact on Migration.

Uganda is party to various bilateral negotiations and labour agreements. For example, it has bilateral labour agreements with Saudi Arabia and Jordan, as well as with Qatar, which provided 40,000 jobs for Ugandans in 2017.

The Government of Uganda formally invites civil society stakeholders to take part in developing migration policy, most notably through their participation in the National Coordination Mechanism on Migration.

Areas with potential for further development

Given the success of bilateral agreements in safeguarding the rights of Ugandan labour migrants, treaties could be negotiated with other nations where Ugandans are employed.

Engagement and consultation with the private sector on agenda-setting on migration-related issues could also be expanded.

4. Advances the socioeconomic well-being of migrants and society

Migration Governance: examples of well-developed areas

Policies protecting the rights of Ugandan labour migrants, including through the Guidelines on the Recruitment and Placement of Ugandan Migrant Workers Abroad, were given operational weight with temporary bans on labour migration to certain countries in 2015. These bans were subsequently lifted after concerns over treatment of workers, safety and non-adherence to bilateral agreements were addressed.

Uganda takes account of labour migrants' skills and capabilities when deciding whether to admit them, and offers a number of visas to individuals wishing to work or invest in Uganda. Visa categories include those for investments in agriculture, mining, manufacturing and for business and trade, as well as those for volunteers, NGO workers and missionaries, and other employees and professionals. The National Council for Higher Education determines the equivalence of academic or professional qualifications gained abroad.

Remittances in Uganda are regulated by the [Foreign Exchange Act](#), the [Foreign Exchange \(Forex Bureau and Money Remittance\) Regulations](#), and the [Mobile Money Guidelines](#). As part of the G20 Plan to Facilitate Remittance Flows, the Government of Germany is working with the Central Bank of Uganda to develop regulations for mobile financial services markets.

Foreign students may undertake studies in Uganda with student visas. Tuition fees are, on average, 20 to 30 per cent more for foreign students than for Ugandan students; however, differential fees were abolished for students from East Africa Community member states in 2014.

Areas with potential for further development

Labour migration management policies designed to complement development initiatives are starting to emerge in Uganda. There is a lack of information on monitoring the labour market's demand for immigration, and Uganda does not publish occupational-shortage lists.

Foreign students are not permitted to undertake employment in Uganda during the course of their studies and there is no clear path to obtain a work permit after graduation.

Despite strong regulations, remittance transfer costs to/from Uganda remain over seven per cent of the principal amount.

5. Effectively addresses the mobility dimensions of crises

Migration Governance: examples of well-developed areas

Uganda's [National Policy of Disaster Preparedness and Management](#) has specific provisions addressing displacement impacts following disasters. For instance, Section 2.2.3 covers "Internal Armed Conflicts and Displacement of Persons" and prescribes policy actions to be implemented in order to facilitate mobilization of large scale disaster relief in the event of armed conflict.

Uganda has a well-managed refugee framework, as embodied in the [Refugees Act](#) of 2006 and [Refugee Regulations](#) of 2010. The legal framework opens Uganda to all asylum-seekers, granting refugees with relative freedom of movement, the right to seek employment and opportunities to acquire land. Refugee status is given *prima facie* for certain nationalities. Uganda has a comprehensive [National Policy for Internally Displaced Persons](#) dating back to August 2004.

Uganda keeps records of its nationals living abroad and immigrants in the country. The Immigration and Citizenship Control Act establishes procedures for the registration of migrants within Uganda. The Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration manages points of entry, including the issuance of visas and entry permits. Furthermore, Ugandan nationals living abroad are required to register with the nearest Ugandan embassy.

Areas with potential for further development

The [National Policy for Disaster Preparedness and Management](#) does not have top-down and bottom-up emergency communication systems that take into account the specific vulnerabilities of migrants. The National Crisis Coordination Centre is still in the process of building capacity around early warning systems, and is yet to mainstream migrants as a specific vulnerable group.

There is currently no comprehensive climate change-related framework in Uganda. In 2016, Uganda received a preparation grant of USD 1.5 million to develop its national Strategic Program for Climate Resilience. The programme intends to assess climate-induced migration implications for building resilient cities.

There is scope to increase and systematize data collection and analysis on migration dimensions of crises.

6. Ensures that migration takes place in a safe, orderly and dignified manner

Migration Governance: examples of well-developed areas

Border control and enforcement are effectively administered by the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control (DCIC). Recent technological improvements, including an electronic visa and permit application system, allow those seeking a Ugandan visa to apply online on the immigration website where visa

options and eligibility criteria are clearly indicated. This information is then matched with biometric data at the border.

Uganda has two border management systems: Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) and the Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS).

The need for continuous training and capacity-building has been recognized by DCIC and immigration officers in the field. Notably, a training academy was completed by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in April 2017 and then transitioned to the Government of Uganda. IOM is also currently working with Uganda's Ministry of Internal Affairs to develop training manuals and curricula for the academy.

Uganda has taken steps to combat human trafficking, including the adoption of the [Prevention of Trafficking of Persons Act](#) and subsequent enforcement through the National Action Plan: PTIP (2013).

Areas with potential for further development

Uganda's [Citizenship and Immigration Control Act](#) was amended in 2009 to allow dual citizenship. However, there is currently no formal programme focused on the reintegration of emigrant populations back into Ugandan society. Though drafted, the National Diaspora Policy has not yet been adopted.

There is scope for more comprehensive and up-to-date data on human trafficking. The publicly available trafficking statistics in Ugandan Police Force's Annual Crime Report tend to be outdated.

Key sources

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