

Global Migration Futures

Using scenarios to explore future migration in the Horn of Africa and Yemen

International
Migration
Institute

IMI



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

IMI Policy Briefing 11, June 2012

RMMS Regional
Mixed Migration
Secretariat 

Exploring the future of migration in the Horn of Africa: survey insights

With approximately 83 million inhabitants as of 2010, of which more than 83 per cent live in rural areas, and only 300,000 are registered abroad as migrants, what role will Ethiopia play in migration patterns within and from the Horn of Africa over the next 20 years?¹ What effects will China's increasing economic and educational investments in and diplomatic engagement with Horn countries have on infrastructure, economic growth, and migration patterns in the region? How will peace between Sudan and South Sudan or conflict between Somalia and Kenya impact migration in the region?

These are just a few of the questions posed by over 30 migration experts and senior practitioners working within academia, civil society, governments, the private sector, the media, and international organisations in their responses to an online survey disseminated by the International Migration Institute and Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat as part of their joint project on future migration scenarios in the Horn of Africa and Yemen.

Through this initiative, the research team sought to gather insights on the present factors driving and constraining migration within, from and to the region; the relatively 'certain' trends that will impact future migration in the region; and the factors about which we have the least amount of knowledge and data, but which have a high potential to impact future migration. Additionally, through the survey, the research team sought to understand what experts and senior practitioners perceived as being likely and unlikely future scenarios of migration in the Horn of Africa and Yemen.

This policy briefing synthesises their insights, questions, and perceptions, and includes common assumptions and

¹ Data from the UN Population Division and World Bank



ideas that require further investigation. Survey responses provided a starting point for discussions during the project's stakeholders workshop in April 2012 in Nairobi.

Because there are no experts on the future, the research team invites readers to use this material to question the factors that respondents reported as important and to interrogate their expectations for the future of international migration in the Horn of Africa and Yemen.

Professional background of respondents (n=22)	
International organisation	45.5%
Academia	27.3%
Policy/government	13.6%
Civil society	4.5 %
Media	4.5 %
Other	4.5 %

Source regions of respondents (n=30)	
Horn of Africa & Yemen	60.0%
Europe	33.3%
North America	3.3%
South America	3.3%

(Total Survey Responses: 34)

Key future trends (or 'relative certainties') impacting migration

Survey respondents identified the trends in the table below as playing an important role in impacting future migration drivers and patterns in the Horn of Africa and Yemen and as being relatively 'certain' to take place in the next 20 years. In reviewing these perceived certainties, consider: Can you envision situations in which these trends may not continue in the future? What evidence exists to support the claim that these trends will continue? Do you find that certain trends do not belong (i.e. are uncertain) or are missing from this list? If so, which ones?

Furthermore, consider: What effect will these trends have on future migration drivers and patterns? How might some of these trends, for instance increasing literacy and economic decline, interact with one another to produce migration outcomes? Knowing that these trends may take place, and exploring their potential impacts on migration in the Horn of Africa and Yemen, what should your institution do to position itself to be prepared and to ensure the fulfilment of its mandate in the future? Below we provide an example of how you might think strategically about one of these future relative certainties.

Relative Certainties in the Horn of Africa & Yemen over the next 20 years

What we know

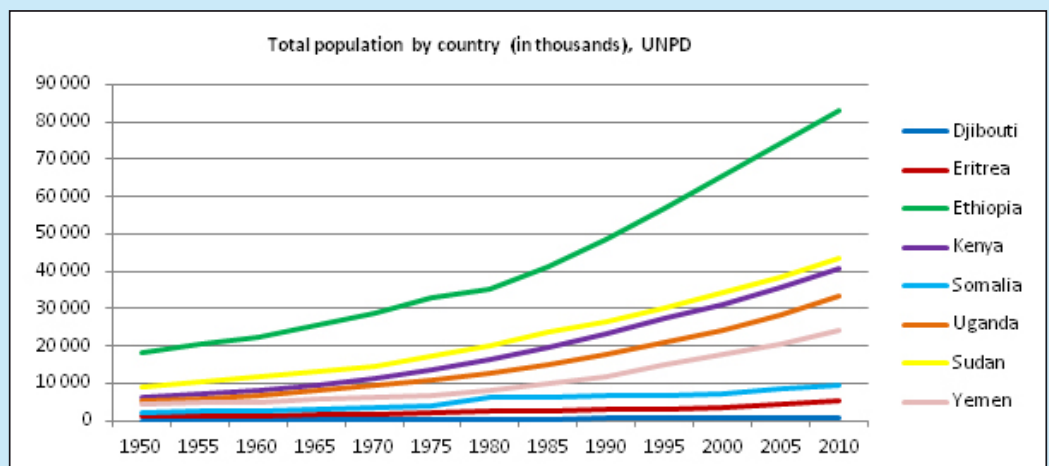
Political	Economic	Social
<p>Politics in the Horn of Africa over the next 20 years are highly dynamic and unpredictable. Respondents offered no future political certainties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing regulation of remittance economy Economic growth in Ethiopia Economic stability in Somaliland and Puntland Increasing income and resource inequality in society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Globalisation Modernisation – youth find traditions and customs less desirable Increasing links with diaspora Increasing female education Increasing literacy
Demographic	Technological	Environmental
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population growth Youth bulge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion of mobile phone networks and internet access Infrastructure improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued natural resource extraction Desertification Environmental degradation Recurrent drought

Population Growth

In the next 20 years, it is relatively certain that population growth will continue in the Horn of Africa and Yemen, as fertility remains above replacement levels, with Somalia having the highest fertility rate in the region in 2010 with more than six children per woman, and Djibouti having the lowest with approximately four children per woman. Ethiopia, which has the highest population in the region, has a fertility rate of more than four children per woman. Total fertility is declining in the region; however, so too is child mortality. Thus, the rate of population growth remains steady at around 2% per annum.

Population growth may be a trend that helps to drive future migration within and from the region; however, this depends on the interaction between population growth and a range of other factors. For instance, population growth combined with

rising education and economic growth could prompt greater urbanisation, intra-regional mobility, and out-migration, as people's aspirations and capabilities to migrate increase. On the other hand, should population growth accompany economic decline and a diminishing educational infrastructure, long-distance migration to and from the region may decrease, while migration within individual states in the region and short-distance



regional migration may still occur. Understanding how population growth may interact with more uncertain (predominantly economic and political) factors to produce different migration outcomes might prompt policy

makers to think strategically about urban infrastructural planning and tertiary education development, welfare planning, skills training, and political stability.

Key future uncertainties impacting migration

Survey respondents identified the factors in the table below as having the potential to play an important role in impacting future migration drivers and patterns in the Horn of Africa and Yemen, but as being relatively 'uncertain' in terms of their future outlook, given the lack of knowledge and data about them. Identifying and analysing uncertainties is one of the most crucial components of planning for the future. Forecasts and predictions often fall short in helping institutions plan for the long-term, because they only integrate relative certainties into their analyses and assume that relatively uncertain factors will mimic the status quo. Thus, given the certainty that the political, economic, social, technological, or environmental climate will undoubtedly change in the next 20 years, forecasts are of little use for long-term planning.

Examining the factors that are the most uncertain and have a high potential to impact migration is the advantage offered by the scenario methodology. This invitation to

explore the causes and consequences of migration over the long term produces a wide range of factors that may be potential future drivers of migration. Factors that are not evident or are controversial may not surface as easily, yet they are just as important. As you review the perceived uncertainties below, ask yourself: Are there any factors missing from this chart? If so, which ones?

Furthermore, consider what impact will these uncertain factors have on future migration drivers and patterns? How might some of these factors, for instance labour markets and political stability, interact with one another to produce migration outcomes? Depending on how these factors take shape in the future, and exploring their potential impacts on migration in the region, what should your institution do to position itself to be prepared and to ensure the fulfilment of its mandate? Overleaf we provide an example of how you might think strategically about one future uncertainty.

What we don't know

Relative Uncertainties in the Horn of Africa & Yemen over the next 20 years

Political	Economic	Social
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migration policies (aims of) • Influence/intervention of governments from outside the region • Democratic governance • State fragmentation, political transition and conflict in Somalia • Regional integration • Respect for political rights • Ethiopia gaining a sea port • Political instability and conflict between Sudan and South Sudan • Contest over Ogaden territory • Political stability and conflict in Yemen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investments from and influence of China • Growth of cities as economic hubs • Investments from diaspora • Role of remittances • Economic growth • Economic inequality • Organised crime networks and war economies • Piracy and illicit trade at ports • Labour markets and demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread of Islam and Islamic social norms • Normative views of migration • Gender inequality • Integration of minority groups • Ethnic relations • Local, self-help structures and dispute-resolution structures
Demographic	Technological	Environmental
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural depopulation • Impact of youth bulge • Impact of urban population growth on infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remittance technologies • New uses of mobile telephony • Technologies to combat crises (e.g. food insecurity) • Agricultural innovation • Technological access • Transportation • Border control technologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land tenure • Oil industry in Uganda, South Sudan, Kenya and Somalia • Changes or variations in climate • Changes in environment • Access to fresh water • Rainfall patterns • Impact of dams • Preservation/conservation norms and efforts • Environmental impact of urbanisation

Access to fresh water

The African continent holds a 9% share of the fresh water available worldwide, with fresh-water distribution across the continent varying widely. The Horn of Africa is one of three regions with the lowest share of fresh water.¹ A study from the United Nations Environment Programme identifies the Horn of Africa as a region that may experience water scarcity in 2025, with less than 1,000 m³ per person per year.² Fresh-water access depends not only on environmental factors such as groundwater and rainfall, which determine fresh-water *availability*, but also demographic factors such as population growth and urbanisation, and socio-economic factors such as conflict, poverty, agricultural practices, and technology and water management systems, which determine people's ability to *access* and effectively use water. Based on the highly variable nature of rainfall³ and the high degrees of uncertainty associated with socio-economic factors affecting access, fresh-water access over the next 20 years remains highly uncertain.

Fresh-water access, particularly a lack thereof, has divergent potential implications for future migration patterns in the Horn of Africa and Yemen. What scholars have already observed concerning human responses

1 UNEP (2010) 'Regional Overview: Availability of Freshwater'. Africa Environment Outlook: Past, present and future perspectives. UNEP. Available at: <http://www.unep.org/dewa/africa/publications/aeo-1/148.htm>

2 United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. (1999) Global Environmental Outlook 2000. UNEP, Earthscan: Addis Ababa and London. Available at: <http://www.unep.org/dewa/vitalwater/article83.html>.

3 UNEP (2010) 'Regional Overview: Availability of Freshwater'. Africa Environment Outlook: Past, present and future perspectives. UNEP: Nairobi. Available at: <http://www.unep.org/dewa/africa/publications/aeo-1/148.htm>.

to environmental strain is that in many cases, people learn to adapt to their constrained environments, where possible, and migration is only one of the many possible adaptive responses to environmental stress. When migration does occur, it is often because environmental disruptions take place in conjunction with other factors; for instance, when a lack of access to fresh water occurs alongside severe drought and governmental inability or unwillingness to carry out effective safeguards or damage controls. Moreover, in cases of rapid-onset disasters resulting from extreme weather events (such as droughts or floods), people tend to migrate to safer locations nearby and for a temporary period of time, rather than to international destinations and permanently. Environmental stress may also constrain the capabilities of populations that are already economically vulnerable, preventing people from moving who would otherwise do so in an attempt to improve their livelihoods.

Understanding how fresh-water access in the Horn of Africa may interact with future demographic and socio-economic contexts to produce different migration outcomes might prompt policy makers to think strategically about developing infrastructure, particularly in cities, and efficient water management and treatment systems, as well as introducing policies that encourage responsible water usage. UNEP explains that although many people do not enjoy access to water for domestic use and irrigation in Africa, 'some industrial, agricultural and domestic users have access to subsidized water supplies, and have no incentive to use water carefully, or to reuse or recycle water.'⁴

4 *Ibid.*

Perceived UNLIKELY futures of migration in 2030

Based on their expertise and observations about the present migration drivers, patterns, and outcomes in the Horn of Africa and Yemen, survey respondents were asked

to describe what they believed was the most unlikely migration future for the region in the next 20 years.

1 Rooted

Movement within, to, and from the Horn of Africa and Yemen has dramatically decreased, and in some places has come to a halt. Not only are people constrained from moving, owing to a lack of capabilities, but people both within the region and in neighbouring regions have appeared to lose most aspirations to move.



2 Free Range

The Horn of Africa and Yemen region is an area characterised by open borders. Government policies have shifted to emphasise mobility over migration, allowing people to move freely in the region to live, attend school, and work without any red tape. To this end, governments are supporting programmes that allow individuals to be hypermobile in the region by investing in English and Swahili language programmes, infrastructure, cheap portable technologies, and introducing foreign budget airlines. Moreover, governments have made efforts to improve asylum procedures for individuals fleeing persecution or generalised violence.



Perceived LIKELY futures of migration in 2030

Based on their expertise and observations about the present migration drivers and patterns in the Horn of Africa and Yemen, survey respondents were asked to

describe what they believed was the most likely migration future for the region in the next 20 years.

1 The Great Return

There is a relatively stable government in Somalia which is attracting the return of members of the diaspora. Non-Somalis who want to take part in the country's growing business sector are also migrating to the country. This is fuelling economic growth and urbanisation. The flow of IDPs and refugees from south/central Somalia to surrounding regions in the 2010s has reversed, as people are increasingly taking advantage of arable lands in the south and economic opportunities in Mogadishu and Kismayu. Neighbouring countries and Western Europe and North America are increasingly reluctant to host refugee communities. This, combined with relative stability and economic growth in Somalia, has prompted the return of many refugees from Kenya's Dadaab refugee camp and Yemen. Still, a considerable number of Somalis have settled and remain in the region's major cities as well as the North Eastern Province of Kenya; and a considerable number continue to migrate abroad, given the 'culture of international migration' that has deepened over the last half century.



3 Empire at the Crossroads

Economic inequality, population growth, high youth unemployment, and high levels of rural to urban migration caused by unsustainable rural economies and soil exhaustion, are prompting high rates of Ethiopian out-migration within the region and farther afield. Somalia is experiencing political stability and low levels of conflict, relative to what it experienced in the 2010s, and Kenya continues to be a destination for economic migrants, as economic growth and modernisation have continued at a rapid rate. Tensions are increasing between incoming Ethiopian migrants and Kenyan nationals, as Kenya faces high levels of youth unemployment, and perceived competition in the job market is high. Yemen has become a 'failed state' in international relations terms, unable to modernise appropriately to the regional or global economy. Yemenis are migrating to the Gulf at rates not seen in the recent past.



2 The Great Exodus

More than 30% of the total population of the Horn of Africa and Yemen has migrated outside of the region, with certain countries in the region experiencing higher rates of emigration than others. Over the years, environmental changes have combined with political, economic, social, demographic, and technological drivers of migration to create high emigration and high dependency on remittances.



Planning for the Future: a First Step

The above stories reveal what migration stakeholders and experts working in the Horn of Africa and Yemen perceive as being likely and unlikely futures for migration.

These stories are in no way predictions of what the future of the region will look like.

It is interesting to note that many respondents perceive 'no migration' as the least likely future, and perceive Ethiopia as playing a major role in the region's future migration patterns.

In reviewing these stories, do you find any elements to resonate with your own perceptions about future migration in the region? Is there a future absent from the set that you think is crucial to recognise in thinking strategically about, and planning for, the next 20 years?

The objective of the Global Migration Futures project in the Horn of Africa and Yemen is not to uncover what are likely and unlikely futures. Rather, it is to become aware of what futures are possible. Asking respondents

about their perceptions of the future is an important **preliminary** step. This step reveals the mental frames that experts and stakeholders work within and provides discussion points to push experts and stakeholders beyond such frames to think innovatively and strategically about the future.

The final scenarios of this project will be generated by an iterative process of scenario-building and data and literature analysis and should be treated as tools to promote ongoing discussions and to challenge our knowledge of international migration in the region.

The final scenarios, and their building blocks of relative certainties and uncertainties, will be presented in a separate report. They should prompt readers to think:

Given these preliminary sets of circumstances/trends/factors, how can we position ourselves within our sector and within the migration field, and what can we do institutionally, to be prepared if and when any of these issues come to pass over the next 20 years?



The Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS) was established in mid-2011. The overall objective of the RMMS is to support agencies, institutions and forums in the Horn of Africa and Yemen sub-region to improve the management of protection and assistance response to people in mixed migration flows in the Horn of Africa and across the Gulf of Aden or Red Sea in Yemen. It primarily concentrates on protection aspects of the so-called 'northern route' mixed migration flows from Somalia and Ethiopia and through Somalia, Ethiopia and Djibouti to Yemen, but also looks at other flows, in particular the 'southern' flow through Kenya and Tanzania to the Republic of South Africa and beyond.

The establishment of the Secretariat was a response to key recommendations from the Regional Conferences on mixed migration in the Gulf of Aden, attended by agencies and authorities from the region (held in Yemen 2008 and Djibouti 2009). A meeting in Djibouti in March 2011 served to specifically consult on and discuss the establishment of the RMMS.

The added value of the RMMS is that it brings a regional dimension to analysis of information collated from the well-established and data-generating Yemen Mixed Migration Task Force (MMTF) as well as the other MMTFs established in Kenya (for Somalia), Bosaso (Puntland), Djibouti and Hargeisa (Somaliland). The RMMS aims to address overall regional migration and asylum challenges identified by the Inter Agency Standing Committee's Mixed Migration Task Force (IASC MMTF), and coordinate closely with existing MMTFs, all co-chaired by UNHCR and IOM.



The International Migration Institute (IMI) is committed to developing a long-term and forward-looking perspective on international migration. IMI analyses migration as an intrinsic part of broader global processes of development and change, rather than as a problem to be solved.

Migration has always played a central role in global processes of social, economic and political change. But recent shifts in international migration raise new intellectual and practical challenges for humanity in the twenty-first century.

Most countries are now experiencing both immigration and emigration. Improvements in transport and communications further encourage migrants to lead transnational lives. This challenges existing models of identity and the nation-state. IMI's aim is to advance understanding of the multilevel forces driving current and future migration processes. This can provide the basis for policies designed to realise the potential benefits of migration.

IMI was established at the University of Oxford in 2006. It is a member of the Oxford Martin School and also forms part of the Oxford Department of International Development, where it is based. We collaborate with other research centres at the University of Oxford: the Refugee Studies Centre and the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society. See www.migration.ox.ac.uk