

Uganda

MIGRATION PROFILE

*Study on Migration Routes
in the East and Horn of Africa*

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Maastricht Graduate School of Governance (MGSoG)



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1.Introduction

The Republic of Uganda is one of the founding members of the Eastern African Community (EAC) and a key player in the Great Lakes region in the East of Africa. It borders on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the west, on South Sudan in the north, on Kenya in the east and on Rwanda and Tanzania in the south. It is a landlocked country; however it shares a large part of one of the largest lakes in the world, Lake Victoria, in the south of the country (CIA, 2017). Its last population census deemed the population at 39 million of which 2 per cent are immigrants (UN DESA, 2015a). The country has an HDI value of 0.493, ranking globally at 165 out of 188 countries. Employment rates in Uganda reach 82 per cent, yet 79 per cent of these are considered to be in vulnerable employment. As such this constitutes a push factor for migration as individuals look for better employment opportunities elsewhere (UNDP, 2016).



Source: CIA, 2017.

Table 1: Uganda's Key Demographic and Development Indicators

Indicator	Uganda
Total area, in sq km ^a	241,038
Population (2015), in million ^b	39.03
Urban Population (2015), % of total ^c	16.1
Population Growth Rate, annual % ^d	3.3
Ethnic Groups ^a	Baganda 16.5% Banyankole 9.6% Basoga 8.8% Other 65.1%
Human Development Index (2015), country rank out of 188 ^e	0.493 163
GDP Based on PPP per Capita, current international dollars per capita ^f	2068.23
Life Expectancy at Birth (2015), years ^e	59.2
Unemployment (2015), % of labour force ^e	3.6
Youth Unemployment (2015), % ages 15-24 ^e	6.0
Multidimensional Poverty Headcount (2011), % ^e	70.3
Gini Coefficient (2010-2015) ^e	41.0
Foreign Direct Investment (net inflows, 2015), current USD millions ^d	1,057.30
Net Official Development Assistance Received (13), current USD millions ^d	1628.25
Personal Remittances Received (2015), current USD millions ^d	1,049.32

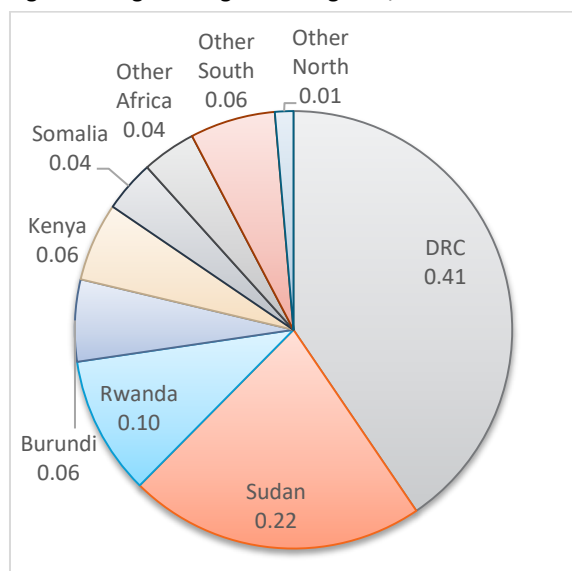
^a CIA, 2017; ^b UN DESA, 2015b; ^c UN DESA, 2014; ^d World Bank, 2017b; ^e UNDP, 2016; ^f IMF, 2017.

Migration wise, Uganda is a mixed migration country acting as origin, transit and destination country. Historically it has been a destination for refugees, asylum seekers and economic migrants, due to multiple instability crises in the region. Examples are the 2013 civil war of South Sudan, the humanitarian crisis in Somalia in 2011 and political violence in Burundi and the DRC. Uganda, on the other hand, is known for its relative political stability, traditional hospitality and generous asylum policies, increasing its attraction for asylum seekers from other countries in the region (DAI Europe and EuroTrends, 2015).

As an emigration country, Uganda's major push factors are employment opportunities elsewhere as well as recent environmental risks. The latter describes a new trend where environmental shocks drive displacement, often confined to the same districts. The former is described by continuous population growth, high youth unemployment rates and the lack of attractive employment options as witnessed for example by relatively large migration flows of health sector workers from Uganda. At the same time, a demand for skilled and unskilled labour in other countries is a pull factor as Ugandan emigrants move to supply this labour. This is especially relevant where it concerns tertiary-educated individuals, making Uganda the 12th highest emigrant country for highly skilled expats in OECD countries (IOM, 2013).

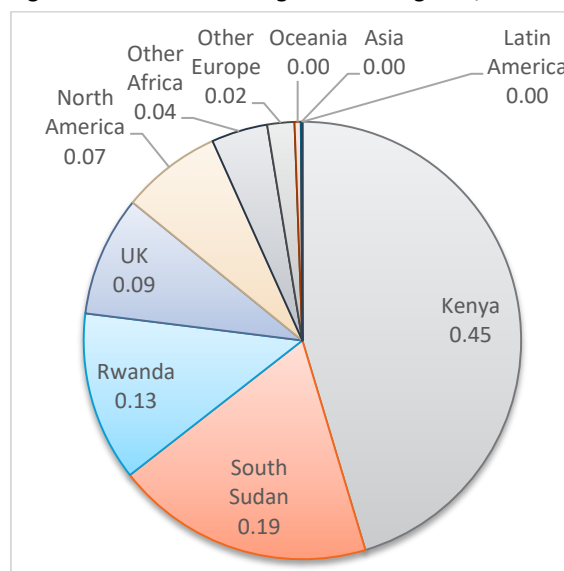
The emigration stock, as of 2015, was estimated to be 736,017 denoting less than 2 per cent of the total Ugandan population. The top destination countries of Ugandans are Kenya, South Sudan, Rwanda, the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, as well as other African countries (Figure 2). As for the immigrant stock, the UN DESA migration trends of 2015 demonstrate a stock of 749,741 migrants. As shown in Figure 1, the top origin countries are the DRC, Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya and Somalia (UN DESA, 2015a).

Figure 1: Origin of Migrants in Uganda, 2015



Source: UN DESA, 2015a.

Figure 2: Destination of Migrants from Uganda, 2015



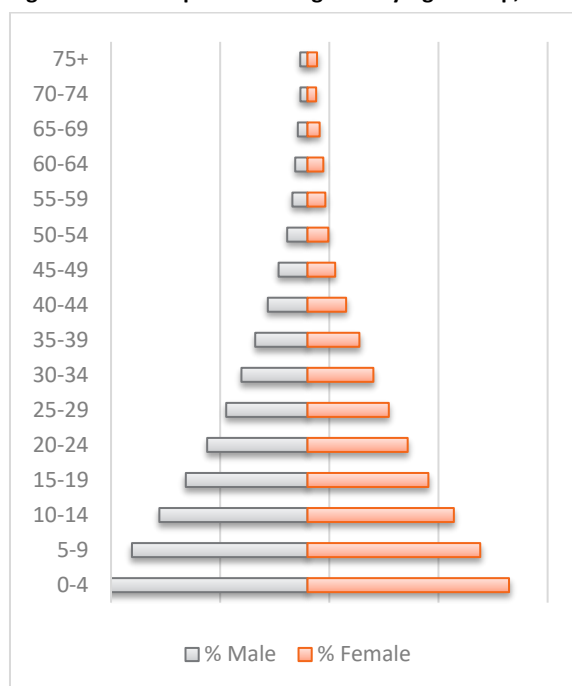
Source: UN DESA, 2015a.

The stock of 749,741 immigrants shows a steep increase from 2010 where the UN DESA Trends show a stock of 529,160 (UN DESA, 2015a). This crescent trend is expected to continue as significant numbers of South Sudanese refugees enter the country. These are fleeing their country since 2013

due to civil war, with an estimated influx of 163,540 South Sudanese refugees in 2016 alone (RMMS, 2016).

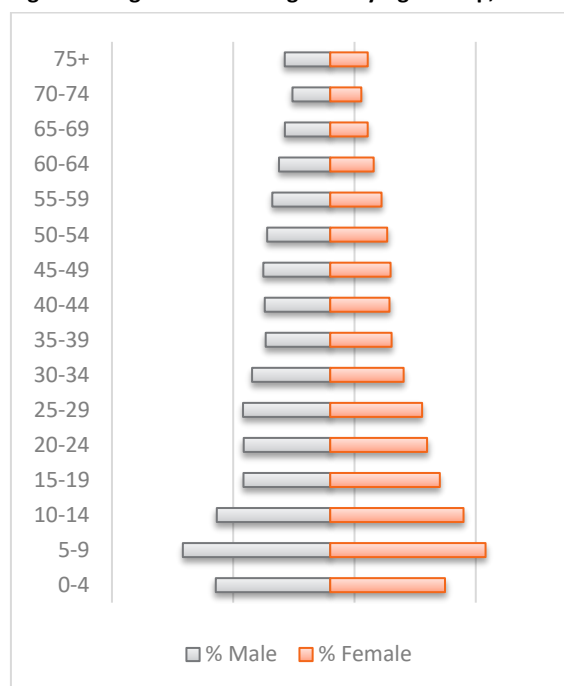
Comparing the population pyramids of the general population of Uganda and of the migrant stock (Figure 3 and Figure 4 respectively), interesting differences appear. The migrant stock pyramid has a more even distribution across different age groups, while the total population shows a typical pyramid form.

Figure 3: Total Population in Uganda by Age Group, 2015



Source: UN DESA, 2015a.

Figure 4: Migrant Stock in Uganda by Age Group, 2015



Source: UN DESA, 2015a.

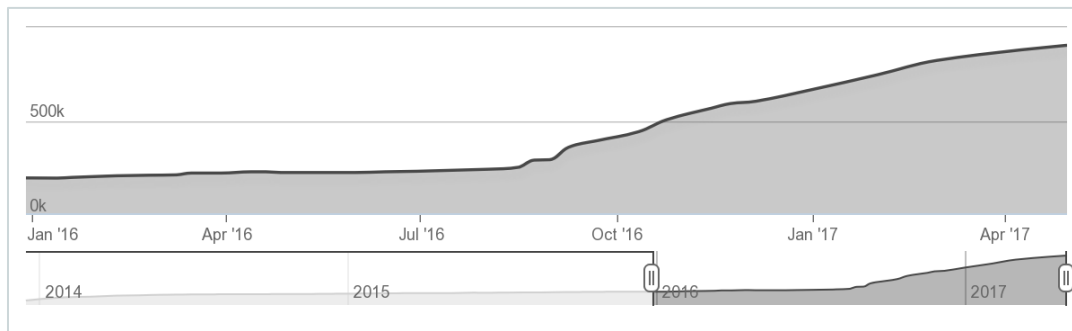
2. Forced Migration/ Displacement

Uganda has a long history of forced migration, having been host to large contingents of refugees over the past decades and suffering massive internal displacement, as well as emigration, as a result of a breakout of violence in the north of the country. Such forced migration trends in the late 20th century spurred a diaspora process which estimates predict make up 10 per cent of the Ugandan population (IOM, 2016).

2.1. Refugees in Uganda

The number of refugees in Uganda is a hard thing to assess as South Sudan's mounting crisis causes thousands of refugees to flow into the country daily. UNHCR data from May 2017 states that there are 919,156 South Sudanese refugees in Uganda, showing a staggering increase compared to previous years. Figure 5, taken from UNHCR data, demonstrate the steady increase of South Sudanese refugees between January 2016 (195,930) and the end of April 2017 (898,138) (UNHCR, 2017b).

Figure 5: South Sudanese Refugees in Uganda, between 2016 and 2017



Source: UNHCR, 2017b.

Beyond the South Sudanese refugee crisis, the refugee stock of Uganda in July 2016 was 665,040 (RMMS, 2016). Other countries of origin are the DRC, Chad, Syria, the Central African Republic, Pakistan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Eritrea, Rwanda, Burundi and Somalia (UNHCR, 2017c). An expected outcome of the South Sudanese crisis is the record number of new arrivals in 2016. 211,101 refugees were registered and 134,615 are still to be registered, with no cases of refoulment and a majority of cases being granted prima facie refugee status (UNHCR, 2017a).

Uganda is one of the top refugee-hosting countries in the world, at eighth place, and the third largest refugee-hosting country in Africa. This is a result of both its geography and the instability in its neighbouring countries, as well as its generally favourable refugee protection mechanisms. Uganda is known for its refugee legal and policy framework, being internationally hailed for its success. In the words of Ban Ki-Moon: *“Uganda’s refugee policy is an inspiration for the region and the wider world”* (UN, 2016). Similar messages are echoed by international organizations like UNHCR, stating their continuous support for the country in order to assist refugees and their host communities (Ongaro, 2017).

Uganda has gathered such positive reputation for its integrative policy since 1999, pursuing local social and economic integration of refugees. It allows for freedom of movement, providing land, the right to work and access to social services like education and health. These come from the Refugee Act of 2006 and the Refugee Regulations of 2010 (National Authorities, 2006; 2010). The aim of this approach is for refugees to become independent of aid and strengthen their lives and communities (Kreibaum, 2016). However, the lifestyle of refugees is highly regimented and bureaucratically regulated. The government’s responsibility stops at the provision of land and UNHCR coordinates humanitarian assistance. This also leads to physical separation of refugees and nationals, leading to possible resentment between communities (Mulumba & Olema, 2009). Moreover, full legal integration in the form of acquiring citizenship is not a possibility and refugees are discouraged from making “permanent settlements,” even if they are in a protracted situation (Kreibaum, 2016).

Settlements tend to occur through self-settling processes in urban areas or through organized settlements where the government declares pieces of land “officially gazetted” for refugees (RMMS, 2016). Refugee camps and settlements tend to be concentrated in the north-west of the country (UNHCR, 2016a). This might be due to the proximity to the DRC and South Sudan, the two main origin countries for refugees in Uganda.

2.2. Refugees from Uganda

The total stock of Ugandan refugees, as indicated by the Norwegian Refugee Council in 2016, is 12,786 globally. They are concentrated in the following five countries: United States, United Kingdom, South Africa, Canada and Kenya (RMMS, 2016). Data from 2009 to 2012 demonstrates an increasing trend of Ugandan nationals applying for asylum abroad (IOM, 2013). This trend is not self-evident from the literature and further research is recommended to better understand the reasons for this development.

2.3. Internal Displacement in Uganda

Current estimates demonstrate that the country has approximately 30,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), a number which has declined dramatically from the mid-2000s where in 2007 this number was at 1.4 million (IOM, 2013; UNDP, 2016). Such movements come as a result of civil war and ethnic strife, geographically concentrating most of these cases in the north of the country. The end of the war with the Lord's Resistance Army has contributed to this steady decrease over the years, after a cessation of hostilities in 2006. Most of the IDPs living in camps at this time returned to their homes or got resettled, even though many have still not found durable solutions (DAI Europe and EuroTrends, 2015). This might explain the asylum claims abroad, however, specific research is still needed. In order to achieve resettlement, initiatives were needed to reintegrate persons affected into their communities. An example of such an intervention is the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (IOM, 2013). This program, funded by the World Bank, aims to empower communities in Northern Uganda to enhance the capacity to identify and implement sustainable development initiatives. The fund distribution delineates as follows: 35 per cent for social protection, 20 per cent for education, 20 per cent for health, 15 per cent for water supply and 10 per cent for agriculture (World Bank, 2017a).

3.Regular/ Labour Migration

3.1. Immigration

Labour immigration in Uganda follows labour mobility, a trend expected to increase, particularly in East Africa through the loosening of visa requirements for EAC citizens. Next to this, Uganda's economic growth and sector developments, especially oil and infrastructure, attract labour migrants (DAI Europe and EuroTrends, 2015). Data analysing work permits issued by the government between 2012 and 2013 show that 63 per cent of workers came from Asia, as 38 per cent of all permits were issued to Indian citizens followed by 15 per cent for Chinese citizens. As for the EAC, citizens from these countries made up 7 per cent of the full sample, with Kenyans having the highest number of permits. An interesting trend shows that 63 per cent of contracts are temporary, demonstrating a working cycle instead of permanent relocation to Uganda (IOM, 2013).

3.2. Emigration

As previously sketched, main push factors for leaving Uganda surround socio-economic factors, such as population growth and youth unemployment, which encourage Ugandans to search for job

opportunities abroad, especially in the health sector. Adding to this trend, problematic ownership of land resources, distorted in favour of older generations, encourages youth emigration (DAI Europe and EuroTrends, 2015). This is reflected by 47 per cent of Ugandan emigrants to OECD countries being tertiary-educated (World Bank, 2016). Main destination countries for these migrants tend to be developed countries like the United Kingdom and the United States. Most recently there has been an increase in Ugandans traveling to the Middle East for employment, with a 95 per cent male incidence (IOM, 2013).

In matters of return migration, studies have compared the educational attainment of skilled migrants to their national counterparts in employability. The results show that returning migrants with university degrees are more successful in the labour market than immigrants or non-migrants. This does not hold for secondary or lower level of education, where non-migrants have an advantage (Thomas, 2008). This finding enriches the discussion of reintegration of migrants in Uganda, as it demonstrates the positive market possibilities for this group.

4. Internal Migration

Data on internal migration is limited, with the most recent numbers coming from the census of 2002. Needless to say much has happened in the last 15 years; still we can observe interesting trends. First, rural-rural and rural-urban migration is observed as a survival strategy due to extensive declining agricultural yields. Distribution of internal migrants therefore, are heavily focused on urban areas, which can be observed in Table 2 (IOM, 2013).

Table 2: Distribution of Internal Migrants by Region, 2002

	Male	Female	Total
Rural	438,600	451,200	889,900
Urban	218,500	241,000	459,500
Total	657,100	692,200	1,349,400

Source: UBOS, 2002.

A second trend identified is the predominant literacy rate among internal migrants with 814,100 literates, amounting to 80 per cent of this migrant population. This implies a correlation between literacy and propensity to migrate, perhaps due to increased perceived capacity of thriving in the new environment, especially if moving to urban areas. A final trend is the majority (56%) of internal migrants reported working, whilst 39 per cent were not working (IOM, 2013).

5. Irregular Migration

While generally, irregular migration due to its nature is inherently difficult to measure, the numbers of observed incidents of irregular migration in Uganda have increased over the years as has the number of deportations. Still, the rate of deportations relative to discovered irregular migrants is fairly low at 69 per cent (IOM, 2013). Irregular migration in Uganda is often tied to searching for better economic opportunities abroad. It is also a origin country for Ugandans searching for opportunities in Europe and Asia and a transit country for those going to South Africa for work (DAI Europe and EuroTrends, 2015; IOM, 2016). Knowledge on the routes and networks is still very scant and irregular migrants are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking in Uganda.

5.1. Human Smuggling

There is a surprising lack of literature about smuggling networks and routes in Uganda. This is noteworthy as transnational trafficking is extensively analysed in Uganda, and yet there is little information on smuggling as an activity. Such a field should be analysed in further research.

5.2. Trafficking in Human Beings

Human trafficking in Uganda is a serious issue, as it is an origin, transit and destination country for people subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking. It is considered a Tier 2 country, under the US State Department system (US Department of State, 2016). Victims of trafficking are men, women and children; each with their own vulnerabilities. Trafficked children come from Uganda itself, Pakistan, India, China, the DRC, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania and South Sudan and are forced into agricultural labour and sex work. Other examples of forced labour found in Uganda are agriculture, fishing, forestry, cattle herding, mining, stone quarrying, brick making, car washing, scrap metal collection, street vending, bars, restaurants, and domestic services (DAI Europe and EuroTrends, 2015; US Department of State, 2016). While the majority of victims of trafficking nationally are children, transnationally it is adults. Adult victims of trafficking have been subjected to forced labour in South Sudan, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait and women have been recruited as domestic workers, even though it is expressly forbidden to do so, and in many cases forced into prostitution in the Middle East (UAE, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Qatar). Outward trafficking to these Gulf States often happens through Kenya, with the largest number of Ugandan victims identified in Kuwait (DAI Europe and EuroTrends, 2015).

A report provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs shows that victims of trafficking are ultimately recruited through deceived promises of employment and education. In transnational trafficking, exploiters threat to demand refund of traveling expenses (tickets, visa, documents, etc.) from adult victims, tying them to debt bondage. For child victims, traffickers exercise control by financially compensating the children's parents and even appealing to religion (Coordination Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2014).

Research on child trafficking by the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery shows that trafficker profiles vary from transport agencies, bar owners, recruitment agencies to strangers who steal children or rebel groups. Discussing the means of deceit, the report also points out the role of parents, who many times force children to move out or engage with traffickers with

the hope of receiving remittances or deceived by the hopes for a better life for their children (UYDEL, 2009).

Even though irregular migration, by definition, is difficult to keep up with and obtain accurate data on, the unfortunate trend evidences that trafficking and smuggling has been on the rise in Uganda, as more incidences are intercepted each year (DAI Europe and EuroTrends, 2015). Adding to that, government responses have been dim, as it cannot provide victims with adequate services and tends to rely on international organizations and NGOs. Nonetheless, Uganda has seen an increase into investigation of trafficking cases, reaching 108 cases in 2015 (US Department of State, 2016).

6. Migrant's Vulnerabilities and Protection Issues

The following vulnerabilities and protection needs have been identified for migrants in Uganda (RMMS, 2016):

- The recent increase in immigration to Uganda, especially after the renewal of conflicts in South Sudan, poses major challenges, regardless of Uganda's generally open migration policies. Considering that 89% of migrants from South Sudan are women and children, risks of sexual and physical abuse are high. Another major problem is health-related, since malaria and cholera are widespread in refugee camp areas.
- Undocumented migrants, especially women, are especially vulnerable. Those that are not considered as migrants or IDPs are not entitled to humanitarian assistance and, therefore, often resort to high-risk activities (e.g. sex work). As a result, undocumented migrants face higher risks of physical and sexual abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, etc.
- Ugandan migrant workers are another vulnerable group. Migrant workers, especially women, are recruited illegally in Middle Eastern countries and often become subject to forced labour and physical and sexual exploitation.

7. Relevant National Policies and Stakeholders

As in the case of Ethiopia and Kenya, Ugandan migration policies seem more advanced and comprehensive compared to other countries in the region. Existing legislation in the field of migration provides for matters related to **citizenship, immigration, labour migration and recruitment, employment of migrant workers, and refugees**. In addition, **human trafficking** is criminalised (see Table 3). Uganda has created a **favourable environment for refugees** and has recently developed/ begun developing national policies related to migration, national development, internally displaced persons, disaster management, and the Ugandan diaspora (IOM, 2013; RMMS, 2016). The Ugandan Government also provides guidelines for the **recruitment** of labour migrants and developed a job-matching database for Ugandan migrants (IOM, 2013).

Table 3: Uganda's Key Migration Legislation and Policy Responses

Law/Policy	Content
Aliens (Registration and Control Act) 1985	Provides for matters related to registration of non-Ugandans.
Employment (Recruitment of Ugandan Migrant Workers Abroad) Regulations, 2005 (2005 No. 62)	Provides for licensing, inspection and services of recruitment agencies, defines fees, documentary processing, employment standards and welfare and employment services.
The Uganda Citizenship and Immigration Control Act, 2000	Provides for matters relating to citizenship, travel and identification documents, immigration control and registration of foreigners.
Refugees Act 2006 (Act No. 21 of 2006)	Provides for matters relating to refugees including rules regarding asylum application and procedure as well as rights and obligations of refugees and asylum seekers.
The Employment Act, 2006 (Act No. 6)	Provides for general principles related to employment, employment relationships, rights and duties as well as wages. It prohibits discrimination against migrant workers and prohibits the employment of irregular migrants.
Equal Opportunities Act, 2007	Provides for matters related to equal opportunities in in line with the Consitution "to eliminate discrimination and inequalities against any individual or group of persons on the ground of sex, age, race, colour, ethnic origin, tribe, birth, creed or religion, health status, social or economic standing, political opinion or disability, and take affirmative action in favour of groups marginalized on the basis of gender, age, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom for the purpose of redressing imbalances which exist against them; and to provide for other related matters."
Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2009	Prohibits human trafficking, defines penalties for non-compliance and provides for the protection of VoTs.

Sources: ILO, 2017; IOM, 2013.

The National Migration Policy responds to issues related to socio-economic, cultural and political development (IOM, 2013). Both the **First National Development Plan for 2010/11-2014/15** and the **Second National Development Plan 2015/16-2019/20** do not acknowledge the development potentials of international migration sufficiently. The latter mentions rural-urban migration a few times and only in the annex it defines facilitating "orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies" (Republic of Uganda, 2015, p.275) as a post-2015 goal (Republic of Uganda, 2010; 2015).

Uganda is developing a **National Diaspora Policy** to encourage Ugandans in diaspora to participate more fully in national development. For this purpose the Diaspora Services Department, which deals with matters related to diaspora, including the facilitation of the diaspora's contribution to the Ugandan society, economy, technology and its political development, has been established (Republic of Uganda, 2017).

Uganda's **National Policy for Internally Displaced Persons** from 2004 provides for rights and support of IDPs (IOM, 2013). In addition, the Ugandan Government provides assistance to victims of trafficking (VoTs) including reintegration and return (IOM, 2013). The Ugandan Government makes significant efforts to combat human trafficking, for instance, through awareness raising campaigns related to the risks of human trafficking (IOM, 2015; US Department of State, 2016). There is, however, room for improvement. The US Department of State (2016) recommends that Uganda step up resources and strengthen capacities of officials as well as services available to VoTs within Uganda and abroad. In addition, it emphasises the need to collect data on the prevalence and prosecution of human trafficking and to expand awareness among the Ugandan population about the risks related to human trafficking.

Uganda has signed **bilateral labour agreements** with Saudi Arabia and Jordan (Baikie, 2016). In addition, Uganda is interested in expanding bilateral relations with other prominent destination countries of Ugandan migrants such as the UAE, Oman and Qatar (Manishimwe, 2016). No evidence on bilateral labour agreements between Uganda and other countries in the East and Horn of Africa could be found.

Key Actors in the field of migration include, but are not limited to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its Diaspora Services Department, the Ministry for Gender, Labour and Social Development, the External Employment Unit, the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control, and the Coordination Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons (IOM, 2013; Republic of Uganda, 2017; RMMS, 2016).

Gaps

IOM (2013; 2015) recommends that the Ugandan government create implementation plans for their migration policies and increase awareness for existing legal channels for migration among the Ugandan population. Moreover, regarding immigration and emigration, the IOM (2013) urges the Ugandan government to increase migrant protection measures, particularly for women, as women make up a large percentage of both emigrant and immigrant stocks. Furthermore, the National Development Plans do not exploit the development potentials of migration sufficiently. Not only do the plans neglect to mention financial flows such as remittances, which would contribute to Uganda's development, but they also neglect to mention any potential development through the transfer of skills (IOM, 2013). Therefore, IOM (2013) recommends that the Ugandan government increase efforts to strengthen the connection between the Ugandan diaspora and Uganda, since this would contribute positively to Ugandan development. Concerning irregular migration, the US Department of State (2016) recommends that the Ugandan government increase resources for combating human trafficking and smuggling, to increase public awareness regarding the risks of irregular migration, to expand assistance to and protection of VoTs and to collect data on the prevalence and prosecution of human traffickers.

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