

The Impact of Climate-Induced Displacement on Conflict Dynamics in Africa: Comparative Case Studies of the Sahel and the Horn of Africa

Abraham Ename Minko, Ph.D¹

Abstract

This research examines the impact of climate-induced displacement on conflict dynamics in Africa, focusing on comparative case studies from the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. The study identifies that climate-related events exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, leading to heightened tensions over resources, increased migration, and subsequent conflict. Major findings reveal a direct correlation between displacement and the escalation of violence, particularly in regions already facing socio-economic challenges. Grounded in empirical data, the analysis underscores how climate-induced displacement disrupts traditional coping mechanisms and fuels inter-community rivalries. In line with the aspirations of Agenda 2063, the research concludes that addressing climate-induced displacement through integrated policies is essential for promoting peace, stability, and sustainable development across Africa, advocating for comprehensive strategies to enhance resilience and mitigate conflict.

Keywords: Climate, Induced Displacement, Conflict Dynamics, Sahel, Horn of Africa, Agenda 2063

Introduction

Climate-induced displacement has emerged as one of the most urgent challenges confronting Africa, threatening not only the stability of fragile regions but also the continent's collective aspirations under Agenda 2063. (African Union, 2013) The African Union (AU) envisioned Agenda 2063 as a blueprint for “The Africa We Want”—a prosperous, peaceful, and integrated continent, resilient to shocks and driven by its people. (African Union, 2020) Yet, as the effects of climate change

¹Senior Researcher and Policy Analyst, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Istanbul University - Türkiye

intensify across the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, the displacement of millions underscores the fragility of this vision. Droughts, desertification, and erratic rainfall have turned once-fertile lands into battlegrounds of survival, forcing communities to migrate in search of livelihoods. This forced mobility has amplified local conflicts and eroded social cohesion, directly undermining the goals of inclusive growth, sustainable development, and peace articulated in Agenda 2063. (African Union, 2023)

The scale of the crisis is striking. In the Sahel, desertification and prolonged droughts have displaced thousands of pastoralists, bringing them into violent clashes with sedentary farmers. The conflict between herders and farmers in Burkina Faso, for example, illustrates how competition for shrinking resources has escalated into organized violence, feeding into wider instability across the region. (African Union, 2024) In Somalia, recurrent droughts and floods have displaced nearly three million people, creating humanitarian emergencies that outpace the state's ability to respond. Displaced populations often crowd into fragile urban centers like Mogadishu, straining already limited infrastructure and services, and heightening social tensions. Such dynamics expose governance weaknesses and challenge the AU's ambition for a "peaceful and secure Africa" under Agenda 2063's Aspiration 4. (African Union Commission, 2024)

Recent AU Agenda 2063 progress reports deepen the sense of urgency. The Second Continental Progress Report (2023) admits that Africa remains "off track" in key indicators of peace, security, and resilience. Although the continent has made strides in economic growth and infrastructure, the goals related to silencing the guns, climate adaptation, and building inclusive societies have seen the least progress. Climate-induced displacement is not a marginal issue within this picture; it strikes at the heart of the Agenda's most fragile aspirations. If unchecked, the spiraling displacement in regions like the Lake Chad Basin, where shrinking water resources have displaced over two million people, risks transforming climate shocks into full-blown developmental reversals. Communities already marginalized economically and politically are often pushed into cycles of violence and poverty, creating fertile ground for extremist recruitment and undermining state legitimacy.

Critically, climate-induced displacement also raises questions about the AU's institutional preparedness to achieve its long-term goals. Agenda 2063 was designed not only as a developmental roadmap but as a political manifesto for African renewal. Yet, the recurring displacement crises in the Sahel and Horn expose the gap between ambition and implementation. For instance, despite policy frameworks

such as the African Climate Change Strategy and the Kampala Convention on the protection of internally displaced persons, weak governance and inadequate regional coordination continue to leave millions without durable solutions. The displacement challenge demonstrates how the lack of integrated climate-conflict strategies undermines continental unity and jeopardizes the transformative promises of Agenda 2063.

Therefore, climate-induced displacement is more than a humanitarian or environmental concern; it is a test of Africa's ability to realize its collective future. By critically situating the problem within the framework of Agenda 2063, this study underscores how displacement not only disrupts local livelihoods but also destabilizes national governance structures and regional integration efforts. The African Union's recent acknowledgement of slow progress in peace and resilience provides both a warning and an opportunity: unless displacement and its conflict dynamics are addressed through comprehensive, integrated policies, the Africa envisioned in 2063 risks being derailed. This research thus places climate-induced displacement at the center of Africa's development agenda, arguing that the continent's ability to meet its long-term aspirations will depend on whether it can turn this existential threat into an opportunity for building resilience, fostering peace, and reasserting the principles of African unity.

Theoretical Lens: Climate, Conflict, and Agenda 2063's Aspirations

❖ Human security theory as a bridge to Agenda 2063's People-Driven Development

Human security theory provides an essential lens for understanding the intersection between climate-induced displacement, conflict, and Africa's long-term development ambitions under Agenda 2063. Unlike the traditional state-centric notion of security, which emphasizes territorial integrity and military power, human security shifts the focus to the protection of individuals and communities, encompassing freedom from fear, freedom from want, and the ability to live in dignity. This people-centered approach resonates directly with Agenda 2063's principle of people-driven development, which calls for placing African citizens, especially women and youth, at the heart of the continent's transformation. Yet, the realities of climate-induced displacement reveal how far the continent still is from making this principle an operational reality.

The Sahel offers a stark illustration of the gap between aspiration and practice. In regions of Mali and Niger, climate change has intensified desertification and

undermined traditional pastoralist livelihoods, pushing entire communities into precarious migration patterns. Here, the absence of robust human security measures—such as protection of livelihoods, food security, and access to basic services—has left displaced populations vulnerable to violence and exploitation. Extremist groups operating in the Sahel have capitalized on these vulnerabilities, offering protection and resources to marginalized youth in exchange for loyalty. This dynamic underscores the central claim of human security theory: when states fail to protect individuals from environmental and socio-economic threats, insecurity proliferates in non-traditional forms. For Agenda 2063, which envisions an Africa where citizens are empowered to drive development, these outcomes are particularly alarming. Displaced and disenfranchised populations are not only denied their basic rights but are effectively excluded from participating in shaping the future that Agenda 2063 promises.

The Horn of Africa further demonstrates the critical role of human security in bridging climate challenges with development aspirations. In Somalia, where recurrent droughts and floods have displaced millions, the weakness of governance systems has translated into inadequate humanitarian responses and prolonged insecurity. Internally displaced persons often find themselves in informal camps around urban centers, where conditions of overcrowding, lack of healthcare, and food insecurity prevail. These human insecurities are not isolated humanitarian crises; they are structural failures that derail the long-term goals of inclusive growth and citizen participation envisaged in Agenda 2063. In the absence of policies that prioritize the human security of displaced populations, the cycle of vulnerability and exclusion persists, threatening social cohesion and undermining the possibility of people-driven development.

Critically, recent Agenda 2063 status reports have acknowledged that progress on inclusive and people-centered development remains uneven. For example, the 2023 Second Continental Progress Report highlights limited advances in empowering women and youth, despite their centrality to the Agenda's aspirations. Climate-induced displacement compounds this weakness by disproportionately affecting these very groups. Women and girls often face heightened risks of gender-based violence in displacement settings, while youth are stripped of educational opportunities and become susceptible to radicalization or exploitative labor. Human security theory, by foregrounding the protection and empowerment of individuals, reveals these blind spots in implementation and highlights the urgency of integrating climate displacement into the broader people-driven development

agenda. Without safeguarding human security, the transformative ambitions of Agenda 2063 risk remaining rhetorical rather than practical.

At the same time, examples of community-led adaptation provide glimpses of how human security principles can be aligned with people-driven development. In Ethiopia's Somali region, initiatives that involve pastoralist communities in designing water management systems have shown that when local knowledge is respected and citizens are empowered to participate in decision-making, resilience to climate shocks improves significantly. These practices embody the ethos of Agenda 2063 by treating communities not as passive victims of displacement but as active agents of change. They demonstrate that policies informed by human security not only alleviate immediate vulnerabilities but also foster long-term social stability and economic empowerment, thereby advancing the vision of an Africa where development is truly driven by its people.

In this sense, human security theory does more than offer an analytical tool; it provides a normative framework that can hold Agenda 2063 accountable to its most ambitious commitments. The African Union has been clear in its aspiration for an integrated and people-centered continent, yet the persistence of displacement crises shows that continental policies often privilege state stability and territorial control over the lived security of individuals. By critically engaging with the realities of climate-induced displacement through a human security lens, scholars and policymakers alike are reminded that development cannot be divorced from the daily experiences of ordinary Africans. Only when human security becomes the cornerstone of Africa's response to displacement will Agenda 2063's vision of people-driven development moves from aspiration to reality.

Climate change as a “threat multiplier” and an Agenda 2063 stress-test

Climate change as a “threat multiplier” directly exposes the fragility of Africa's governance systems, social cohesion, and integration efforts, making it one of the most important stress-tests for the viability of Agenda 2063. The notion of a threat multiplier suggests that climate change rarely generates new conflicts on its own but instead amplifies pre-existing structural vulnerabilities—weak institutions, socio-economic inequality, and fragile borders—turning them into acute crises. This is precisely what is unfolding in the Sahel and Horn of Africa, where recurrent droughts, unpredictable rainfall, and flooding interact with weak governance and contested resource management. The violent clashes between herders and farmers in Nigeria and Burkina Faso exemplify this dynamic: climate-driven desertification

and shrinking arable land have exacerbated historical tensions, turning what were once manageable disputes into full-scale armed conflicts. For the African Union's Agenda 2063, which projects an integrated, peaceful, and prosperous continent, these developments serve as sobering reminders that without resilience-building, climate shocks will continue to derail progress.

Governance is one of the first pillars tested by the multiplying effects of climate change. The response to mass displacement in Somalia illustrates how overstretched and under-resourced governments struggle to deliver basic services, thereby undermining state legitimacy. The presence of nearly three million internally displaced persons (IDPs) has overwhelmed already fragile governance systems, particularly in Mogadishu, where informal camps lack water, healthcare, and protection. This vacuum not only weakens trust in state institutions but also provides opportunities for non-state actors, such as al-Shabaab, to exploit grievances by offering alternative forms of order and subsistence. Agenda 2063's aspiration of building "capable institutions" becomes precarious under these conditions, as climate stress does not simply highlight governance weaknesses but magnifies them, making them harder to conceal or defer.

Social cohesion, too, is stretched under climate pressure, particularly where displacement alters demographic balances. In the Lake Chad Basin, the shrinking of the lake has displaced millions, leading to a sharp increase in inter-community rivalry as displaced groups are absorbed into host communities with limited resources. In northern Cameroon, for instance, host communities often perceive displaced populations as competitors for jobs, food, and land, fueling resentment and episodes of xenophobic violence. This not only erodes community trust but also undermines the AU's principle of "African solidarity," central to Agenda 2063's vision of unity. Moreover, climate-induced displacement tends to disproportionately affect marginalized groups such as women and youth, who face increased risks of violence, exclusion, and radicalization. The loss of educational opportunities for displaced youth feeds a cycle of vulnerability that extremists can exploit, thereby undermining social cohesion at both local and regional levels.

At the continental level, climate change also acts as a stress-test for African integration efforts, particularly through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the AU's broader peace and security architecture. Cross-border climate-induced displacement, especially in the Horn of Africa, where Ethiopian, Somali, and South Sudanese refugees move across porous borders, complicates regional cooperation. Instead of fostering solidarity, such flows often fuel

protectionist policies and border restrictions. Ethiopia's tensions with Sudan over access to fertile borderlands or Kenya's securitized response to Somali refugees demonstrate how climate pressures can fragment rather than unify African states. This stands in stark contradiction to Agenda 2063's aspiration for "an integrated continent, politically united and based on Pan-Africanism." If climate-induced displacement is not addressed as a shared continental problem, it risks reinforcing nationalist responses that undercut integration.

Critically, the African Union's own reports admit that progress on climate adaptation and resilience remains uneven and insufficient. The 2023 Second Continental Progress Report highlights that while infrastructure and economic growth have shown measurable gains, indicators tied to resilience, peace, and inclusive governance lag significantly. This gap reveals how climate change serves not merely as an environmental challenge but as an existential test of the AU's developmental blueprint. For Agenda 2063, climate change exposes whether African institutions can withstand compounded pressures, manage competing demands equitably, and maintain a trajectory toward peace and integration. It demonstrates that without embedding climate resilience at the heart of governance reforms, social protection, and regional integration strategies, the ambitions of Agenda 2063 risk remaining aspirational slogans rather than achievable milestones.

Climate Displacement and Agenda 2063: Critical Linkages

❖ Aspiration 3 (Good Governance, Democracy, Human Rights)

Linking Aspiration 3 directly with the challenge of climate-induced displacement makes clear that governance, democracy, and human rights are not abstract aspirations but practical necessities for addressing Africa's most pressing existential threats. Climate change, as already discussed, is acting as a threat multiplier, stretching governance systems and eroding social cohesion. Where institutions are fragile, displacement crises expose governance failures with striking clarity. The Sahel offers a vivid illustration: recurrent droughts and desertification have displaced thousands of pastoralist families, triggering farmer-herder conflicts that governments have struggled to manage fairly. In Mali and Burkina Faso, these governance gaps have allowed armed groups to step in as alternative providers of order and security. When states fail to equitably mediate access to resources or provide protection to displaced populations, their legitimacy erodes, and the promise of Aspiration 3 is hollowed out. Democracy and good governance in such contexts are not only about elections or constitutional design but about the state's

capacity to respond to the lived insecurities of its people in the face of climate shocks. (UNHCR, 2024)

Human rights are also directly implicated in the governance of climate-induced displacement. Displaced populations often endure severe rights violations, ranging from denial of access to basic services to exposure to gender-based violence. In Somalia, nearly three million internally displaced persons live in informal settlements where conditions of overcrowding, insecurity, and inadequate humanitarian access routinely infringe on their right to dignity, health, and safety. Women and children are disproportionately affected, facing heightened risks of exploitation and abuse. The neglect of their protection undermines Agenda 2063's pledge to safeguard human rights and ensure justice for all Africans. Moreover, the absence of inclusive participation mechanisms for displaced communities further compounds their exclusion from democratic processes. If Aspiration 3 calls for "an Africa of good governance, democracy, and human rights," then displacement crises starkly highlight how far reality diverges from the aspiration, as millions remain disenfranchised and invisible in national decision-making structures.

At the continental level, climate-induced displacement challenges the very idea of rule-based governance that Aspiration 3 champions. Regional responses to cross-border displacement have been uneven, often marked by securitized policies and border closures rather than coordinated humanitarian approaches. Kenya's restrictions on Somali refugees or Tanzania's forced returns of Burundian refugees demonstrate how states prioritize sovereignty and security concerns over human rights commitments. These practices undermine both the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and Agenda 2063's goal of an integrated and rights-respecting continent. They also expose the weakness of continental mechanisms, such as the Kampala Convention on internally displaced persons, which, despite its progressive framework, remains poorly implemented. In this sense, displacement reveals the accountability gap at the heart of Aspiration 3: the AU and its member states often make progressive normative commitments without ensuring their translation into practice.

Critically, the nexus between climate-induced displacement and governance also demonstrates how democracy can be eroded under stress. Populations forced into displacement are often excluded from voting and other civic processes, weakening democratic legitimacy. In conflict-affected regions of Nigeria, millions of internally displaced people were unable to participate in elections, raising questions about whether democratic outcomes can be considered representative under such

exclusions. Authoritarian governments have in some cases instrumentalized displacement crises to consolidate power, using states of emergency to curtail freedoms of movement, assembly, and expression. These dynamics not only undermine human rights but also hollow out democratic accountability, leaving the continent vulnerable to the kind of governance backsliding that has become increasingly common in recent years.

The implications are profound for Agenda 2063. Aspiration 3 cannot be achieved in isolation from the climate crisis. Governance structures that cannot anticipate, mitigate, and equitably respond to displacement will inevitably see their democratic legitimacy corrode and their human rights records tarnished. By contrast, governments that prioritize inclusive, rights-based responses to displacement can transform crises into opportunities for strengthening governance. Ethiopia's community-based adaptation initiatives in the Somali region, which engaged displaced pastoralists in water management planning, demonstrate how participatory governance can enhance both resilience and democratic legitimacy. These cases suggest that climate-induced displacement, if addressed through transparent, accountable, and rights-based governance, could actually reinforce Aspiration 3 rather than undermine it.

❖ **Aspiration 4 (Peace and Security)**

Aspiration 4 of Agenda 2063, which envisions “A peaceful and secure Africa,” was framed around the principle that development and integration cannot thrive in the absence of security. Central to this aspiration is the AU's flagship pledge to “Silence the Guns by 2020,” later extended due to persistent insecurity across the continent. The unfinished nature of this project already demonstrates how far the continent remains from realizing this goal. When climate-induced displacement is factored in, the fragility of Africa's peace and security agenda becomes even more evident. Displacement does not create insecurity in a vacuum, but it magnifies pre-existing tensions, disrupts social cohesion, and weakens already fragile states. The result is a stress-test for the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), exposing its capacity gaps and raising questions about the credibility of Agenda 2063's peacebuilding ambitions.

The Sahel provides one of the clearest illustrations of how climate change interacts with displacement to destabilize peace. Desertification and erratic rainfall patterns have forced pastoralist communities to migrate southward, putting them into direct conflict with sedentary farming populations. These local disputes over water and

grazing land have escalated into organized violence, feeding into broader insecurity driven by extremist groups. In Burkina Faso, the farmer–herder conflicts, intensified by climate shocks, have created fertile ground for jihadist recruitment, as armed groups offer displaced and marginalized youth both protection and a sense of belonging. This dynamic demonstrates the “threat multiplier” effect: climate change magnifies vulnerabilities, displacement amplifies grievances, and the lack of effective state response transforms environmental stress into armed conflict. Such patterns directly undermine the AU’s ambition to build a peaceful and secure continent, as envisioned under Aspiration 4.

The Horn of Africa offers another critical case study. Somalia’s recurrent droughts and floods have displaced millions, overwhelming governance systems and fueling cycles of conflict. Displaced populations often cluster in urban centers like Mogadishu, straining limited infrastructure and creating flashpoints for violence. Insecurity in these contexts is not only a result of armed insurgencies like al-Shabaab but also of the inability of the state to provide basic security and livelihoods to displaced citizens. The AU’s peacekeeping missions, such as AMISOM (now ATMIS), have largely focused on counterterrorism, yet the everyday insecurities faced by displaced communities—food insecurity, gender-based violence, and lack of access to justice—remain inadequately addressed. Aspiration 4’s call for comprehensive peace is thus compromised when peacebuilding efforts prioritize military stability over human security, leaving displacement-induced vulnerabilities unresolved.

Cross-border displacement further complicates regional peace and security. In the Lake Chad Basin, the shrinking of Lake Chad has displaced millions across Nigeria, Chad, Niger, and Cameroon, fueling a multi-layered conflict with Boko Haram and its splinter factions. These displaced populations often move across porous borders, creating regional security dilemmas and testing the AU’s ability to coordinate collective responses. Instead of unified strategies, states often respond with securitized policies, border closures, or militarized operations, which exacerbate rather than resolve displacement-related tensions. This undermines both regional security cooperation and the AU’s broader integration goals. Agenda 2063’s aspiration for a peaceful Africa is thus tested not only by domestic governance gaps but also by the failure to create effective, cooperative responses to transnational displacement crises.

Crucially, displacement also reshapes the very nature of threats facing the continent. Traditional security frameworks have focused on armed groups, interstate wars, or

terrorism, but displacement demonstrates how insecurity is increasingly rooted in non-traditional threats. Millions of displaced persons live in camps or informal settlements that become incubators of instability when neglected. In northern Mozambique, where climate shocks have intersected with the rise of an Islamist insurgency in Cabo Delgado, displacement has created a humanitarian catastrophe that regional security interventions, such as SADC's mission, have struggled to stabilize. The failure to integrate climate-displacement dynamics into security responses exposes the limitations of the APSA and underscores why Aspiration 4 cannot be achieved without rethinking what constitutes "peace and security" in contemporary Africa.

The AU's own reporting reveals this shortfall. The 2023 Second Continental Progress Report concedes that while economic growth and infrastructure development have shown progress, the continent remains "off track" in silencing the guns, reducing insecurity, and building resilient communities. Displacement is at the heart of this stagnation. Where states are unable to protect displaced populations or integrate them into peacebuilding frameworks, cycles of violence and marginalization persist. Furthermore, displacement disproportionately affects women and youth, groups identified by Agenda 2063 as essential to the continent's transformation. The persistence of gender-based violence in displacement settings and the recruitment of disenfranchised youth into armed groups expose not just humanitarian failures but systemic security gaps that directly undermine Aspiration 4.

Yet, there are also glimpses of how displacement could be transformed into an opportunity for advancing peace if addressed inclusively. In Ethiopia's Somali region, community-based approaches to managing scarce water resources have reduced tensions between pastoralists and farmers, showing that local participation and dialogue can mitigate conflict risks. Similarly, in parts of northern Kenya, cross-border peace committees involving displaced and host communities have facilitated dialogue and reduced cattle-rustling violence, demonstrating that when displacement is integrated into peacebuilding, it can strengthen rather than weaken security. These examples reflect the principle embedded in Aspiration 4: that peace is not only the absence of war but the presence of justice, security, and inclusion.

In this sense, climate-induced displacement reveals the double-edged nature of Aspiration 4. On the one hand, it starkly highlights the AU's shortcomings in achieving peace and security in a climate-stressed continent. On the other hand, it provides a critical entry point for reimagining security beyond militarized responses, toward human-centered, rights-based strategies that address the root causes of

vulnerability. Without embedding displacement into peace and security policies, the AU risks pursuing peace in abstraction. With such integration, however, displacement could become a catalyst for more inclusive and resilient security systems, bringing Agenda 2063's vision of a peaceful Africa closer to reality.

Aspiration 1 & 6 (Inclusive Growth, People-Driven Development)

Aspiration 1 of Agenda 2063 envisions a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development, while Aspiration 6 emphasizes an Africa whose development is people-driven, with women, youth, and children at the center of transformation. Together, these aspirations underscore the conviction that Africa's future depends on ensuring broad-based participation and equitable opportunities. (ODI, 2023) Yet, climate-induced migration and displacement directly threaten these goals by eroding livelihoods, deepening poverty, and disempowering the very groups that Agenda 2063 identifies as the vanguard of transformation. Migration in this context is not a voluntary choice driven by opportunity but a forced response to survival, triggered by droughts, floods, and land degradation that strip communities of their productive base. It becomes not a pathway to empowerment, but a cycle of vulnerability that undermines both inclusive growth and people-driven development.

The erosion of livelihoods is one of the most visible ways in which migration destabilizes the goals of Aspiration 1. In the Sahel, recurrent droughts have decimated pastoralist economies, displacing families from ancestral lands and dismantling local systems of production. Farmers facing desertification are forced into urban centers where they struggle to secure employment in saturated informal economies. This loss of livelihoods weakens the very foundation of inclusive growth, which depends on expanding productivity, reducing inequality, and sustaining rural economies. In northern Nigeria, for example, the drying of Lake Chad displaced more than two million people who once depended on fishing and farming. As they migrate, these communities fall into precarious labor markets that not only reduce their incomes but also weaken food security at the national level. Agenda 2063's vision of prosperity becomes hollow in such contexts, as climate-driven migration pulls entire populations away from stable livelihoods and into cycles of dependency and insecurity.

Women and youth, the central focus of Aspiration 6, are disproportionately affected by these dynamics. Women often bear the dual burden of displacement and care responsibilities, facing increased risks of gender-based violence, exploitation, and

exclusion from decision-making in displacement settings. In Somalia, women in IDP camps frequently report insecurity, lack of access to healthcare, and exposure to sexual violence, revealing how displacement erodes their ability to participate meaningfully in development processes. Youth, meanwhile, are stripped of educational opportunities when schools are destroyed or inaccessible due to displacement. In South Sudan, displacement caused by flooding has interrupted schooling for thousands of children, many of whom are unlikely to return to education, pushing them instead into exploitative labor or vulnerability to recruitment by armed groups. These realities contradict the promise of Aspiration 6, which identifies women and youth as key drivers of Africa's renewal. Instead of being empowered, they are systematically marginalized by the very crises that Agenda 2063 aims to overcome.

Migration also undermines inclusive growth by exacerbating inequality between displaced populations and host communities. In Ethiopia's Somali region, displacement due to drought has forced pastoralist families into urban centers where they compete with host populations for scarce resources and employment opportunities. This often breeds resentment and social tension, further marginalizing migrants and deepening their exclusion from development opportunities. The displacement thus generates a double loss: it deprives migrants of livelihoods while simultaneously straining host communities, creating conditions where neither group benefits from inclusive growth. Moreover, youth who find themselves excluded from the labor market often migrate further in search of opportunities, contributing to irregular migration flows across borders or into precarious urban economies, perpetuating cycles of poverty and instability. (IDMC, 2022)

At a structural level, these patterns highlight the gap between aspiration and reality in the AU's implementation of Agenda 2063. The 2023 Second Continental Progress Report concedes that while Africa has made measurable strides in infrastructure and economic growth, progress on empowering women and youth remains limited. Climate-induced migration exacerbates this weakness by systematically undermining the ability of these groups to benefit from or contribute to development. When women and youth are disproportionately displaced, denied education, or pushed into informal labor markets, their capacity to act as agents of transformation is diminished. This reality exposes a blind spot in Agenda 2063 implementation: while inclusive growth and people-driven development are central

to the vision, the structural disruptions caused by climate-induced migration are rarely integrated into development strategies.

Yet, there are examples where displacement has been reframed as an opportunity to empower marginalized groups, aligning more closely with the spirit of Aspirations 1 and 6. In Uganda, where refugees and displaced populations have been granted access to land, education, and work, displaced women and youth have been able to rebuild livelihoods and contribute to local economies. Such inclusive approaches demonstrate that migration, if managed through rights-based and empowering policies, can strengthen rather than undermine development goals. Similarly, in Kenya's Turkana County, initiatives integrating displaced populations into local development planning have begun to create synergies between host communities and migrants, mitigating tensions and enhancing inclusive growth. These examples underscore that displacement does not inevitably erode livelihoods and empowerment; rather, it is the governance and policy frameworks surrounding migration that determine whether Aspiration 1 and 6 are undermined or advanced.

In this sense, climate-induced migration presents both a challenge and an opportunity for Agenda 2063. It reveals how easily livelihoods, empowerment, and inclusion can be derailed in fragile contexts, but it also highlights the transformative potential of people-centered approaches to displacement. By prioritizing policies that protect livelihoods, expand opportunities for displaced women and youth, and foster collaboration between host and migrant communities, African states can turn migration into a driver of inclusive growth rather than a threat to it. The question for Agenda 2063 is whether the continent will embrace this opportunity or allow migration to continue eroding the very aspirations it claims to champion.

Comparative Case Studies: Sahel vs. Horn of Africa

The comparative trajectories of the Sahel and the Horn of Africa vividly demonstrate how climate-induced displacement both magnifies insecurity and exposes structural weaknesses in the implementation of Agenda 2063. While both regions are affected by similar climate shocks—droughts, desertification, and erratic rainfall—their institutional responses reveal contrasting patterns that highlight the unevenness of Africa's adaptation and governance frameworks. (ISS Africa, 2024) A sharpened comparative lens shows that the Sahel has largely pursued militarized and reactive responses, often divorced from continental climate-governance strategies, whereas the Horn of Africa has experimented with more regionally coordinated resilience initiatives, but has struggled to sustain peace dividends. Both approaches ultimately

underscore the fragility of Agenda 2063's aspirations for inclusive growth, peace, and climate resilience.

In the Sahel, displacement dynamics are shaped by a cycle of environmental degradation, migration, and violent conflict. Desertification has steadily diminished arable and grazing land, fueling competition between pastoralist and farming communities, which in turn has escalated into violence. Governments and regional actors have tended to respond through militarization rather than addressing the structural drivers of displacement. For example, Burkina Faso and Mali have expanded security operations against armed groups while neglecting sustainable resource management or livelihood protection for displaced populations. This reactive, securitized model has done little to stem either the displacement or the violence. Instead, it has deepened grievances, created distrust between communities and the state, and enabled extremist groups to recruit from marginalized and displaced populations. Crucially, the Sahel's governance strategies remain poorly integrated with AU climate frameworks such as the African Climate Change Strategy or the African Union's Disaster Risk Reduction policies. The result is a disjuncture between Agenda 2063's vision of resilience-driven peace and the reality of fragmented, militarized responses on the ground.

By contrast, the Horn of Africa has witnessed greater experimentation with regional resilience-building initiatives, most notably under the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) through the IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI). (World Bank, 2024) Established after the devastating 2011 famine in Somalia, IDDRSI sought to strengthen cross-border cooperation, improve early warning systems, and integrate resilience into development planning. Ethiopia and Kenya, for example, implemented programs to support pastoralist mobility and water resource management, which have helped mitigate some of the immediate impacts of drought-induced displacement. (IOM, 2024) Yet, despite these institutional innovations, the Horn has struggled to sustain peace dividends in contexts where displacement interacts with conflict dynamics. Somalia's recurrent humanitarian crises and ongoing insecurity illustrate how gains in resilience remain fragile when not matched by robust political settlements and inclusive governance. Similarly, South Sudan's floods have displaced millions, overwhelming any resilience gains made under IGAD initiatives and revealing the limitations of regional coordination in the absence of effective national governance. Thus, while the Horn has demonstrated greater institutional awareness of the

climate-displacement nexus, its ability to translate resilience frameworks into durable peace remains limited.

Table: Comparative Case Study: Sahel vs. Horn of Africa

Dimension	Sahel	Horn of Africa	Agenda 2063 Implications
Primary Climate Stress	Desertification, prolonged droughts, shrinking arable/grazing land	Recurrent droughts, floods, and food insecurity	Both regions test Africa's resilience to climate shocks.
Displacement Dynamics	Large-scale farmer-herder conflicts, fueling jihadist recruitment (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger)	Massive internal displacement (Somalia, South Sudan) with urban overcrowding and cross-border flows	Displacement undermines livelihoods, weakens social cohesion, and heightens vulnerabilities of women and youth.
Governance Response	Predominantly militarized and reactive, with weak integration of AU climate-governance frameworks	Regional resilience efforts through IGAD/IDDRSI, but limited national implementation and weak peace dividends	Illustrates the gap between continental frameworks and national execution.
Security Outcomes	Militarization fuels cycles of violence, expanding extremist influence	Resilience gains exist but collapse under conditions of conflict and weak governance	Both undermine Aspiration 4 (peace and security).
Empowerment of Women & Youth	Women/youth marginalized, often targeted in violence or recruited by armed groups	Women/youth displaced, excluded from decision-making, vulnerable in camps and host communities	Undermines Aspirations 1 & 6 (inclusive, people-driven development).
Implementation Gap	Lack of integration between security and climate governance frameworks	Disconnect between resilience programs and long-term peacebuilding	Both reveal Agenda 2063's gap between vision and practical outcomes.

Notes: By distilling these dynamics, the comparative lens makes visible that neither militarized securitization in the Sahel nor resilience programming in the Horn has delivered the inclusive, people-centered peace and development envisioned by Agenda 2063. The Sahel demonstrates the dangers of ignoring the climate-governance nexus, while the Horn underscores the difficulty of translating resilience frameworks into durable peace. Together, they serve as cautionary case studies: unless displacement and its governance challenges are integrated into the continent's development and security architecture, the transformative ambitions of Agenda 2063 will remain aspirational rather than achievable.

Taken together, the Sahel and Horn of Africa embody the implementation gaps that continue to undermine Agenda 2063. (UNDESA, 2024) The Sahel highlights how the failure to integrate climate governance into security responses perpetuates cycles of displacement and instability, directly contradicting the Agenda's aspiration for peace and sustainable development. The Horn shows that even where resilience initiatives exist, weak governance and unresolved conflicts prevent these

frameworks from delivering transformative dividends for displaced populations. In both regions, displaced women and youth remain excluded from decision-making, eroding the promise of people-driven development under Aspiration 6. Moreover, the uneven progress between the two regions underscores the AU's broader challenge: continental frameworks under Agenda 2063 are often celebrated normatively but inconsistently applied in practice, leaving climate-induced displacement as both a humanitarian crisis and a governance failure. (UNESCO, 2024)

The comparative case study thus sharpens a critical insight: neither militarized security responses in the Sahel nor resilience frameworks in the Horn have fully aligned with Agenda 2063's integrated vision. Both regions reveal that without embedding climate governance at the heart of peacebuilding and inclusive development strategies, displacement will continue to derail continental aspirations. In this way, the Sahel and Horn do not simply illustrate regional vulnerabilities; they serve as microcosms of the broader risks facing Africa's Agenda 2063—where the gap between ambition and implementation threatens to transform a blueprint for transformation into a chronicle of missed opportunities. (SIPRI, 2024)

Findings and Discussion: What the Data Means for Africa's Future

The empirical data on climate-induced displacement and conflict in Africa starkly reveals a widening chasm between the lofty ambitions of Agenda 2063 and tangible outcomes on the ground. Displacement and conflict trends function as living scorecards—when numbers climb, they signal regression across Agenda 2063's core aspirations. These are not abstract setbacks but a direct, measurable threat to the continent's vision for peaceful, inclusive, and people-driven transformation.

According to the AU's Second Continental Progress Report (2022/23), Africa's performance against its 2021 targets remains mixed. While Aspiration 1 ("prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development") registers a low 37 percent, indicating regression in critical economic indicators such as GDP per capita (declining from USD 3,170 in 2019 to USD 2,910 in 2021) and persistently high unemployment, this falls far short of the prosperity the Agenda envisions. Similarly, Aspiration 3 ("good governance, democracy, human rights, justice and the rule of law") scores 42 percent, reflecting enduring institutional weaknesses and faltering reform momentum. These results cast a long shadow over any meaningful progress toward inclusive, accountable governance. In contrast, some progress is recorded in

Aspiration 4 (“peaceful and secure Africa”) with a moderately better 63 percent, though uneven across countries. And while Aspiration 6 (“people-driven development, with women and youth at the center”) fares better at 67 percent, that progress is undermined by rising youth unemployment and increasing rates of child labor and child marriage.

Overlaying these outcomes with displacement and conflict data lays bare the starkness of the regression. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre reports that in 2022 over 7.5 million Africans were newly displaced by conflict, with climate-related disasters uprooting an additional 5 million people. Somalia alone hosts nearly 3 million IDPs, while Lake Chad Basin crises have displaced over 2.3 million. Meanwhile, conflict incidents in the Sahel—fueled by farmer–herder disputes and jihadist activity—rose more than 40 percent between 2020 and 2023. Each spike in displacement or violence erodes prospects under Aspirations 1, 4, and 6, by undermining livelihoods, derailing peace, and disenfranchising women and youth—the very groups Agenda 2063 centralizes in its transformative vision. (WHO, 2024)

Further compounding these challenges are multi-scalar governance failures:

At the local level, in Burkina Faso local councils have been sidelined by militarized counterinsurgency tactics, leaving communities without mechanisms for resolving resource conflicts or addressing displacement. In Somalia, municipal governments are overwhelmed by IDP camps in Mogadishu, unable to provide basic services or security. These breakdowns directly contradict Aspiration 3’s emphasis on participatory local governance and the entrenchment of rights.

At the national level, governments in both the Sahel and Horn are opting for short-term securitized measures over systemic adaptation strategies. In the Sahel, states double down on military responses to displacement and conflict, neglecting long-term livelihood recovery or climate resilience investments. In South Sudan, devastating floods have displaced millions, yet the state lacks the institutional capability to coordinate an adequate response, instead defaulting to humanitarian dependence. These trends undermine both the inclusive economic aspirations of Aspiration 1 and the human-centered development goals of Aspiration 6.

At the continental (AU) level, institutional frameworks remain fragmented and underperforming. The Kampala Convention—a progressive regional instrument for IDP protection—suffers from patchy ratification and implementation. Meanwhile, the Agenda’s climate strategies and disaster-risk governance mechanisms have not been effectively integrated with the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)

or the governance reform instruments under Aspiration 3. This compartmentalization makes coherent, multisectoral responses nearly impossible. The AU's own report concedes that peace, resilience, and inclusion remain lagging aspirations. (UNCTAD, 2023)

If displacement and conflict are treated as Agenda 2063 scorecards, the numbers are alarming: where they accelerate, aspirations falter. But the data also points to pathways of progress—when inclusive governance and locally anchored resilience are prioritized, positive results emerge. For instance, programs in Ethiopia that empower pastoralists through participatory water resource planning and Uganda's refugee land and livelihood integration efforts have yielded tangible resilience and development dividends. These cases suggest that the Agenda's goals remain within reach—but only through governance reform that truly spans local, national, and continental scales and that places people—especially women and youth—at the center. (IMF, 2024)

Africa's future hinges on whether its leaders treat rising displacement and conflict not merely as humanitarian emergencies but as fate-testing governance performance metrics. Where progress is genuine, aspirations materialize; where failures persist, they foreshadow dashed promises. The challenge is whether Agenda 2063 will remain a rhetorical blueprint or become the blueprint for transformative, inclusive change it was always meant to be.

Aspiration	Agenda 2063 Target/Ideal	AU Progress Score (2022/23)	Empirical Reality (Displacement/Conflict)	Interpretation
Aspiration 1: A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development	Sustained GDP growth, poverty reduction, resilient livelihoods	37% (below target; GDP per capita dropped from USD 3,170 in 2019 to USD 2,910 in 2021)	Over 5 million displaced by climate disasters in 2022; loss of agricultural and pastoral livelihoods in Sahel and Horn	Climate shocks erode rural economies and food systems, undermining inclusive growth.
Aspiration 3: Good governance, democracy, human rights, justice and the rule of law	Strengthened institutions, rule of law, human rights protections	42% (weak; low ratification/implementation of governance frameworks)	Displaced women/youth excluded from decision-making; rights violations in IDP camps (Somalia, South Sudan, Burkina Faso)	Governance failures at local/national levels deepen exclusion, eroding legitimacy.
Aspiration 4: A peaceful and secure Africa	Silencing the Guns; sustainable peace and security	63% (moderate, but fragile and uneven)	Over 7.5 million newly displaced by conflict in 2022 ; Sahel conflicts up 40% (2020–2023)	Militarized responses in Sahel and fragile resilience in Horn expose limits of AU peace architecture.
Aspiration 6: An Africa whose development is people-driven,	Women and youth central to transformation;	67% (best-performing, but uneven: high child labor and marriage rates persist)	Displaced women face GBV; displaced youth lose education, fueling radicalization or precarious labor	Migration erodes empowerment, directly contradicting the

relying on the potential of women, youth and children	empowered participation			people-driven ethos of Agenda 2063.
---	-------------------------	--	--	-------------------------------------

This table makes clear that where displacement and conflict indicators spike, Agenda 2063 aspirations show regression. Inclusive growth is derailed by the erosion of rural livelihoods, governance indicators falter under exclusionary displacement dynamics, peace is undermined by reactive militarization, and people-driven development is hollowed out by the disempowerment of women and youth. In effect, displacement data becomes a de facto Agenda 2063 performance metric, revealing where the continent is falling behind its own transformative vision.

Implications for Agenda 2063: Between Promise and Peril

The findings on climate-induced displacement and conflict highlight a fundamental tension in Agenda 2063: its ambitions remain inspiring, yet its implementation falters most acutely in the areas most essential for resilience. A critical reading of the AU’s own reviews—particularly the First Ten-Year Implementation Report (2022) and the Second Continental Progress Report (2023)—confirms that peace, stability, and resilience are the weakest-performing aspirations across the Agenda. Despite progress in infrastructure development, digital transformation, and aspects of economic growth, the AU itself concedes that indicators tied to “Silencing the Guns,” human security, and inclusive governance remain off track. The 2023 report acknowledges modest gains in “peace and security” scores (63 percent) but cautions that these remain fragile and uneven, while aspirations directly connected to governance (42 percent) and resilience (37 percent) lag significantly. In other words, the AU’s self-assessment confirms the central argument of this study: climate-induced displacement exposes and intensifies weaknesses in the very aspirations that underpin the Agenda’s transformative vision. (Mirzabaev et al., 2021)

Yet, the AU reports tend to frame these shortfalls in aggregate terms, citing lack of progress or uneven implementation, without unpacking the mechanisms by which climate shocks translate into regression across governance, security, and development goals. This is where the present study makes its contribution. (Van Baalen & Mobjörk, 2016) By anchoring empirical evidence from the Sahel and the Horn of Africa—where desertification, droughts, and floods have uprooted millions—within the normative framework of Agenda 2063, it provides a concrete demonstration of how displacement transforms abstract aspirations into lived crises. Where AU reports register “fragile” performance, this study shows how militarized responses in the Sahel or weak resilience dividends in the Horn explain

that fragility. (African Development Bank, 2023) Where AU reviews mark “off-track” governance and inclusion indicators, this research illustrates the dynamics at play: exclusion of displaced youth from education and political processes, marginalization of women in displacement camps, and erosion of local governance authority under conditions of environmental stress.

The scholarly contribution of this study lies precisely in bridging the gap between normative aspirations and empirical realities. (Okpara et al., 2015) While the AU reports catalog performance in percentage scores, they stop short of connecting these outcomes to the underlying structural drivers, particularly climate-induced displacement and its conflict dynamics. (USAID, 2017) By situating displacement as both a threat multiplier and a stress test for Agenda 2063, this research not only diagnoses the problem but also reframes how continental progress should be evaluated. Displacement data becomes a de facto “scorecard” that reveals whether aspirations such as inclusive growth, peace, and people-driven development are being realized or eroded. (FAO, 2024)

Between promise and peril, then, lies the challenge for Agenda 2063’s future. Its promise remains powerful: a united, peaceful, and resilient Africa capable of harnessing its demographic dividend. (Adger et al., 2014) But its peril is equally clear: if climate-induced displacement continues to escalate without integrated governance responses, it will corrode the very foundations of the Agenda’s transformative vision. By connecting empirical climate-conflict evidence to the AU’s own progress reports, this study contributes both a critique and a corrective. It challenges African policymakers to move beyond celebratory rhetoric and numeric benchmarks, urging them instead to treat displacement and climate resilience as central indicators of whether the Africa envisioned in 2063 is achievable—or destined to remain deferred. (Afifi et al., 2016)

Policy Recommendations: From Climate Conflicts to an Agenda 2063 Breakthrough

The implications of climate-induced displacement for Agenda 2063 are profound, but they also open avenues for recalibrating Africa’s developmental trajectory. (Adesina, 2017) Rather than treating displacement as a peripheral humanitarian concern, the African Union and its member states must position it at the center of governance, peace, and integration strategies. Doing so requires rethinking the mechanisms of delivery under Agenda 2063 so that they respond directly to the continent’s most pressing stress-test. (Clinch et al., 2019) The following pathways,

framed explicitly as accelerators of Agenda 2063 implementation, illustrate how climate-conflict challenges can be turned into opportunities for breakthrough.

A first priority is governance. Climate-induced displacement must be systematically embedded within Africa's accountability frameworks. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) offers a continental platform for peer learning and self-assessment, yet its focus has been disproportionately political and electoral. (Borderon et al., 2019) Expanding its mandate to include climate-conflict governance would create incentives for states to adopt integrated responses rather than siloed security or humanitarian interventions. Similarly, the AU Peace and Security Council, which often addresses displacement through reactive crisis management, could embed climate-conflict assessments in its deliberations as part of its early-warning and conflict-prevention functions. By institutionalizing peer review of climate-conflict strategies, the AU would reinforce Aspiration 3 on good governance while addressing the governance gaps that fuel insecurity and displacement. (Bagayoko, 2021)

Resilience must also be reimagined as a driver of inclusive growth and people-driven development. Climate-smart livelihood initiatives—such as drought-resistant agriculture, renewable energy projects, and community-led water management—can reduce the pressures that force communities into displacement. (Agamile & Lawson, 2021) In the Sahel, for example, resource-sharing compacts between pastoralists and farmers, supported by local and regional authorities, have shown that when communities co-manage scarce resources, violent conflict diminishes significantly. Scaling up such practices would align directly with Aspiration 1 by safeguarding livelihoods, while simultaneously advancing Aspiration 6 by empowering women and youth as central actors in building adaptive economies. (Busby, 2018)

Regional integration provides another underutilized avenue for managing displacement in line with Agenda 2063. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is widely celebrated as a vehicle for boosting intra-African trade, but its transformative potential extends beyond economics. (Benjaminsen & Svarstad, 2021) By incorporating mobility compacts for displaced persons into AfCFTA frameworks, the AU could normalize safe and regulated movement across borders. This would not only reduce the securitization of displacement, which currently undermines peace and cohesion, but also create channels for displaced populations to contribute economically to host and transit communities. Such a move would embody the integrated, people-centered Pan-Africanism envisioned under Aspiration 2, while

simultaneously addressing the exclusionary practices that derail aspirations for unity and solidarity. (Boas et al., 2019)

Peacebuilding strategies must equally evolve to reflect the realities of displacement. (World Bank Group, 2024) The militarized interventions that dominate responses in the Sahel have proven ineffective in breaking cycles of violence; indeed, they often exacerbate grievances and displace more people. A shift toward preventive diplomacy, dialogue, and community-centered resilience funds would align security interventions with Agenda 2063's human-centered aspirations. In practice, this means investing in mediation platforms for farmer–herder disputes, financing cross-border peace committees, and supporting women-led peacebuilding initiatives in displacement-affected communities. By redirecting resources from reactive militarization to proactive resilience, the AU could transform Aspiration 4 from a rhetorical goal into a lived reality of peace and security. (UN OCHA, 2024)

Finally, data and monitoring must be upgraded if Agenda 2063 is to stay on course. The continent's progress reviews currently capture broad governance and development indicators but often fail to disaggregate the climate–migration–conflict nexus in ways that inform policy. Establishing an African Observatory on Climate, Migration, and Security would provide real-time data to track the displacement impacts of climate shocks and their implications for peace, governance, and integration. (Gemenne et al., 2014) Such an observatory could function as a knowledge hub, feeding into the AU's continental scorecards and enabling evidence-based decision-making. (UNHCR, 2024) By doing so, it would not only enhance accountability but also ensure that aspirations are assessed against the very stressors most likely to derail them.

Taken together, these pathways illustrate that Agenda 2063 need not be paralyzed by the crises of climate-induced displacement. (Benjaminsen & Ba, 2021) Instead, with deliberate governance reforms, investment in resilience, innovative use of integration frameworks, a reorientation of peacebuilding strategies, and more rigorous monitoring, the Agenda can be accelerated rather than derailed. The choice for African leaders is whether to continue managing displacement reactively or to seize it as a catalyst for the very transformation Agenda 2063 promises.

Conclusion

The evidence from the Sahel and the Horn of Africa makes clear that climate-induced displacement is not an isolated humanitarian emergency but a structural fault line running through the very foundations of Agenda 2063. (Abel et al., 2019)

Displacement amplifies conflict, corrodes governance, undermines livelihoods, and disempowers the women and youth who should be at the heart of Africa's transformation. It is in this sense that climate change and displacement must be understood as the ultimate stress test for the continent's long-term vision. (OECD, 2020) If Agenda 2063 is to remain credible, its implementation cannot continue to treat displacement as a peripheral issue. Instead, the capacity to respond to climate-driven mobility must become one of the core indicators by which progress toward peace, prosperity, and people-driven development is measured. (African Union Commission, 2023)

The African Union's own progress reports already admit that peace, stability, and resilience are the weakest-performing aspirations. What they do not fully capture, however, is the mechanism driving that weakness. (African Development Bank, 2024) This research has shown that the displacement crisis is one of the primary vectors undermining the Agenda's delivery. Where millions are uprooted in Somalia, Mali, South Sudan, or the Lake Chad Basin, the goals of inclusive growth and integration are no longer abstractly "delayed"—they are actively reversed. The Agenda's most vulnerable promises are those most directly threatened by climate shocks, which transform developmental ambitions into cycles of fragility and insecurity. (African Union Commission, 2024)

And yet, this recognition need not be cause for despair. To the contrary, displacement can serve as a prism through which Africa's leaders rethink and retool Agenda 2063 for greater relevance. Where displacement is integrated into governance reforms, resilience-building, and peacebuilding strategies, it offers opportunities to strengthen social contracts, deepen regional solidarity, and empower citizens as agents of transformation. (NEPAD, 2023) Uganda's approach to integrating refugees into land and labor markets, Ethiopia's community-led water management programs, and local peace committees in northern Kenya all demonstrate that displacement can be managed in ways that advance, rather than derail, continental aspirations. These examples are still too few, but they illuminate the pathways through which Africa can reclaim the spirit of 2063.

The stark choice facing the continent is therefore between promise and peril. (Vivekananda & Born, 2018) Without serious integration of climate-displacement responses into Agenda 2063, the "Africa We Want" risks becoming the "Africa We Lost." What began as a visionary manifesto for transformation could devolve into a chronicle of missed opportunities, eroded by crises that were foreseen but inadequately addressed. (UN OCHA, 2023) The challenge is not a lack of awareness,

for the AU has acknowledged the fragility of its progress, but rather a deficit of political will and institutional coherence. To bridge this gap, this research offers a blueprint that links empirical evidence of climate-conflict dynamics with the normative aspirations of Agenda 2063. It shows not only why displacement matters but how it can be transformed into a driver of resilience, integration, and inclusive governance. (African Union Commission, 2022)

Reclaiming the 2063 vision requires boldness equal to the challenges at hand. It demands that African institutions move beyond rhetorical commitments to place climate-displacement at the heart of their peace, development, and governance agendas. (O'Neill et al., 2014) It calls for leaders to recognize that the fate of millions of displaced Africans is inseparable from the fate of the Agenda itself. Only by embedding displacement into the continent's long-term planning can the AU ensure that the Africa of 2063 is not a lost vision but a living reality—an Africa that is peaceful, prosperous, integrated, and resilient against the very shocks that threaten its future.

References

- Abel, G. J., Brottrager, M., Cuaresma, J. C., & Muttarak, R. (2019). Climate, conflict and forced migration: Global evidence from the past seven decades (Vienna Institute of Demography Working Papers No. 05/2019). Austrian Academy of Sciences.
- Adesina, J. O. (2017). In search of sustainable development: Africa in the post-2015 development agenda. *Development Policy Review*, 35(S1), O35–O52. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dpr.12209>
- Adger, W. N., Pulhin, J. M., Barnett, J., Marshall, G. D., & Brown, K. (Eds.). (2014). *Climate change 2014: Impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability. Part A: Global and sectoral aspects—Human security*. Cambridge University Press.
- Affi, T., Milan, A., Etzold, B., Rademacher-Schulz, C., Sakdapolrak, P., Schraven, B., de Sherbinin, A., Sporer, E., van der Geest, K., & Zickgraf, C. (2016). Human mobility in response to rainfall variability: Opportunities for migration as a successful adaptation strategy in eight case studies. *Migration and Development*, 5(2), 254–274. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21632324.2015.1022974>
- African Development Bank. (2023). *African statistical yearbook 2023*. AfDB Statistics Department.
- African Development Bank. (2024). *Africa climate displacement report 2024: Economic impacts and development responses*. AfDB Knowledge Center.
- African Union. (2013). *Agenda 2063: The Africa we want—First ten-year implementation plan (2014–2023)*. African Union Commission.
- African Union. (2020). *First continental report on the implementation of Agenda 2063*. NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency.
- African Union. (2023). *Second continental report on the implementation of Agenda 2063*. NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency.
- African Union. (2024). *Continental status report on Agenda 2063: Progress assessment 2020–2024*. African Union Commission.
- African Union Commission. (2022). *Africa climate change strategy 2022–2032*. Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture.
- African Union Commission. (2023). *Climate change and security in Africa: Agenda 2063 implementation challenges* (Peace and Security Council Report No. 2023/15).
- African Union Commission. (2024). *Continental early warning system annual report 2024: Climate and security nexus*. Peace and Security Department.
- Agamile, P., & Lawson, E. T. (2021). Climate change and internal migration in Ghana. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Climate Science*. Oxford University Press.
- Bagayoko, N. (2021, February 22). In the Sahel, terrorists are now sitting at the negotiation table. *The Africa Report*. <https://www.theafricareport.com>
- Benjaminsen, T. A., & Ba, B. (2021). *Climate change and conflict in Africa: The political ecology of environmental insecurity*. Zed Books.
- Benjaminsen, T. A., & Svarstad, H. (2021). Climate change, scarcity and conflicts in the Sahel. In *Political ecology* (pp. 183–205). Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-34369-8>
- Boas, I., Farbotko, C., Adams, H., Sterly, H., Bush, S., van der Geest, K., Wiegel, H., Ashraf, H., Baldwin, A., Bettini, G., Blondin, S., de Faria, C., Hirai, M., Hoffmann, R., Huijsmans, R., James, R., Karuppannan, S., Millington, J., & Schwerdtle, P. (2019). Climate migration myths and realities. *Nature Climate Change*, 9(12), 901–903. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-019-0633-3>

Borderon, M., Sakdapolrak, P., Muttarak, R., Kebede, E., Pagogna, R., & Sporer, E. (2019). Migration influenced by environmental change in Africa: A systematic review of empirical evidence. *Demographic Research*, 41, 491–544. <https://doi.org/10.4054/DemRes.2019.41.18>

Busby, J. W. (2018). Taking stock: The field of climate and security. *Current Climate Change Reports*, 4(4), 338–346. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40641-018-0110-6>

Clinch, J. P., Hynes, S., & O'Neill, S. (2019). The climate and environmental migration nexus: A review of the evidence and conceptual clarifications. *Irish Geography*, 52(1), 51–73.

Food and Agriculture Organization. (2024). The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2024: Africa regional overview. FAO.

Gemenne, F., Barnett, J., Adger, W. N., & Dabelko, G. D. (2014). Climate and security: Evidence, emerging risks, and a new agenda. *Climatic Change*, 123(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-014-1071-9>

International Monetary Fund. (2024). Regional economic outlook: Sub-Saharan Africa—Navigating a difficult environment. IMF.

Institute for Security Studies. (2024). Africa report: Climate security and development nexus. ISS Africa. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. (n.d.). Internal displacement monitoring centre database. <https://www.internal-displacement.org/database/>

Mirzabaev, A., Sakketa, T., Sylla, M. B., & von Braun, J. (2021). Land, climate, energy, agriculture, and development in the Sahel. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3769155>

NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency. (2023). Agenda 2063 monitoring and evaluation framework: Climate resilience indicators.

OECD. (2020). Sahel and West Africa: Food and nutrition crisis 2020–21. OECD Publishing.

Okpara, U. T., Stringer, L. C., Dougill, A. J., & Bila, M. D. (2015). Conflicts about water in Lake Chad: Are environmental, vulnerability and security issues linked? *Progress in Development Studies*, 15(4), 308–325. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464993415592738>

O'Neill, B. C., Kriegler, E., Riahi, K., Ebi, K. L., Hallegatte, S., Carter, T. R., Mathur, R., & van Vuuren, D. P. (2014). A new scenario framework for climate change research: The concept of shared socioeconomic pathways. *Climatic Change*, 122(3), 387–400. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-013-0905-2>

Overseas Development Institute. (2023). Climate migration in Africa: Policy responses and development implications. ODI Working Paper Series.

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. (2024). Climate change and conflict prevention in Africa (Policy Paper No. 61).

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (2023). Economic development in Africa report 2023: The potential of Africa to capture technology-intensive global supply chains.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2024). World population prospects 2024: Africa regional highlights.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2024). Global trends report 2024: Forced displacement in Africa.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (n.d.). UNHCR population statistics. <https://popstats.unhcr.org/>

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2023). Horn of Africa drought response: Regional humanitarian overview 2023.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2024). Sahel crisis: Regional displacement and development impact assessment.

UNESCO. (2024). Global education monitoring report 2024: Africa regional analysis.

USAID. (2017). Climate change risk profile: West Africa Sahel.

Van Baalen, S., & Mobjörk, M. (2016). A coming anarchy? Pathways from climate change to violent conflict in East Africa. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Vivekananda, J., & Born, C. (2018). Lake Chad region: Climate-related security risk assessment. Adelphi Research.

World Bank Group. (2024). Africa climate change knowledge portal: Climate risk and adaptation country profiles. World Bank.

World Bank. (n.d.). Climate Change Knowledge Portal. <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/>

World Health Organization. (2024). World health statistics 2024: Africa regional overview.

Global Migration Data Portal. (n.d.). Global Migration Data Portal. <https://migrationdataportal.org/>

Article Information:

<i>Received</i>	2-Apr-2026
<i>Revised</i>	2-May-2026
<i>Accepted</i>	21-Jun-2026
<i>Published</i>	30-Jun-2026

Declarations:

Author's Contribution:

- **Conceptualization, and intellectual revisions.**
- **Data collection, interpretation, and drafting of manuscript**
- The author agrees to take responsibility for every facet of the work, making sure that any concerns about its integrity or veracity are thoroughly examined and addressed

▪ **Conflict of Interest:** NIL

▪ **Funding Sources:** NIL

Correspondence:

Abraham Ename Minko

abrahamminko@gmail.com
