



COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE 72nd EXTRA-ORDINARY SESSION OF IGAD COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

The IGAD Council of Ministers held its 72nd Extra-Ordinary Session on the 24th June 2021 via video conference, under the chairpersonship of **H.E Dr. Mariam Al-Sadig Al-Mahdi**, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Sudan and Chairperson of the IGAD Council of Ministers, to assess the state of the region and take stock of the South Sudan Peace Process, COVID-19 situation, upcoming Somalia elections and the durable solutions initiative for refugees and displaced populations in Sudan and South Sudan.

The meeting was attended by **H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssef**, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Djibouti; **H.E. Amb. Birtukan Ayano**, State Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia; **H.E. Ababu Namwamba**, Chief Administrative Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kenya; **H.E. Mohamed Abdirizak**, Minister for Affairs of the Federal Republic of Somalia; **H.E. Amb. Beatrice Khamisa Wani**, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of South Sudan; and **H.E. Gen. Odongo Jeje Abubakhar**, Cabinet Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Uganda.

Also, in attendance were **H.E. Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu Negewo**, the Executive Secretary of IGAD; **H.E. Amb. Dr. Ismail Wais**, the IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan; **H.E. Amb. Dr. Mohamed Ali Guyo**, IGAD Special Envoy to Somalia, the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden; **Members of the IGAD Committee of Ambassadors**; **H.E. Maj. Gen. Charles Tai Gituai**, Interim Chair of RJMEC; and **H.E. Maj. Gen. Teshome Gemechu**, Chair of CTSAMVM.

Also in attendance, as observers, were IGAD Partners from the **European Union**, the **Troika Countries** (US, UK and Norway), the **United Nations** and **UNHCR**.

Following opening statements by: H.E Dr. Mariam Al-Sadig Al-Mahdi, Chairperson of the Council of Ministers; H.E. Workneh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary of IGAD and summary reports by the IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan, H.E. Amb. Ismail Wais; the Interim Chairperson of RJMEC, H.E. Maj. Gen. Charles Tai Gituai; the IGAD Special Envoy for Somalia, the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, H.E. Amb. Mohamed Ali Guyo; and the IGAD Director for Health and Social Development Division, Ms. Fathia Alwan;

The Council:

Unanimously welcomed H.E Mariam Al-Sadig Al-Mahdi to her new role as the Chairperson of the IGAD Council of Ministers;

Congratulated H.E. Gen. Odongo Jeje Abubakhar on his appointment as the Cabinet Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uganda;

Commended the people and Governments of the Republic of Djibouti, the Republic of Uganda and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for conducting peaceful and orderly elections;

Called upon the Federal Republic of Somalia and the Republic of Kenya to similarly hold peaceful and orderly polls as per their election calendars;

Took note of the combined adverse effects of coronavirus, successive swarms of desert locusts and seasonal flooding on regional peace, security and stability;

Further noted the impact of inter-state differences on regional peace and security and **reaffirmed** the principles of IGAD advocating for the peaceful settlement of conflicts through dialogue and maintenance of regional peace, stability and security;

Commended the Governments of Kenya and Somalia for restoring the presence of their respective Ambassadors in their respective stations of posting in Nairobi and Mogadishu, and **encouraged** the two countries to sustain engagements in line with the principles of IGAD, the African Union and the United Nations that advocate for peaceful coexistence;

Thanked the Executive Secretary of IGAD, H.E. Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, and the secretariat for his tireless relentless efforts and far-sighted leadership in steering IGAD towards realizing its collective vision and goals, as well as the for the comprehensive report on the state of the region and concrete recommendations on the next steps;

Commended and appreciated the work of IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan and the IGAD Special Envoy for Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Somalia; and **underscored** the need to strengthen political, diplomatic and financial support to the Envoys;

On South Sudan;

Appreciated H.E. President Salva Kiir Mayardit and the leadership of South Sudan for the collective compromises and progress made so far in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) especially in the implementation of Chapters I and II and the holding of the ceasefire;

Congratulated the RTGoNU and the Parties on the formation of the Executive at the State and Local Government levels and the painstaking task they have undertaken in the negotiations on the structure and allocation of positions at these levels;

Commended the Parties for completing the task of expanding and reconstituting the Transitional National Legislative Assembly (TNLA) and in this regard, **urges** the R-TGoNU to expedite swearing-in of members of the Assembly;

Called upon the RTGoNU and the Parties to expedite the reconstitution of the Council of States, the State Legislature and conclude the restructuring and reconstitution of Institutions and Commissions at the national level;

Urged the Parties to adhere to the 35% quota of women representation and to honor and respect this cardinal rule of women representation in the formation of remaining Agreement mechanisms/institutions;

Applauded the RTGoNU for agreeing to take over the responsibility of paying National Monitors of CTSAMVM and NTC for disbursing two-hundred ninety-five thousand two hundred USD (USD 295,200) for this purpose;

Noted the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as logistical and financial challenges towards the graduation and redeployment of Necessary Unified Forces, and in this regard, **called upon** the Parties and the RTGoNU to extend the necessary political, logistical and financial support to the DDR process and particularly the DDR Commission for its full and effective operationalization;

Appealed to all parties under SSOMA to pursue the Sant'Egidio mediation process and adhere to the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement of December 2017, the Rome Declaration of January 2020, and the Declaration of Principles of March 2021;

Urged the RTGoNU and the Parties to expedite the implementation of remaining transitional tasks in particular those activities related to judicial reforms; economic and finance related reforms; establishment of the Special Reconstruction Fund and its Board; the formation of the three Transitional Justice mechanisms; and the permanent constitution-making process;

Called upon the international community to work in close collaboration with line Ministries of the RTGoNU to create enabling environment for the safe and dignified return of refugees and IDPs;

Commended the Republic of Sudan for agreeing to host the inaugural Leadership Retreat for South Sudanese leaders and **encouraged** the RTGoNU, the Parties and Sudan to expedite the convening of the Retreat and;

Committed to actively engage the highest political levels of the international community to mobilise goodwill and support towards the full implementation of the R-ARCSS.

On COVID-19;

Appreciated the contribution of IGAD partners particularly the European Union, the African Development Bank, the Swedish Government and other international partners who have made solid commitments towards supporting the IGAD regional response strategy to COVID-19;

Noted with concern the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic globally and in the IGAD region which necessitates reviewing the current regional response strategy to accommodate longer-term interventions and also requires enhancing cooperation with the African Union Centre for Disease Control;

Also Noted the existing challenges to testing capacity as well as vaccine access and coverage in the region, and **expressed deep concern** with regard to the low rates of testing and vaccination across IGAD Member States and **urged** the International Community and IGAD partners, including the private sector to support IGAD in realizing significantly improved access and administration of the COVID-19 vaccine, particularly for vulnerable populations including refugees, migrants, IDPs, returnees, host and cross-border communities in remote areas;

Took note of the disparities in access to the coronavirus vaccine in developing countries, **called upon** the international community to support a full waiver of intellectual property rights on COVID-19 vaccines, diagnostics and treatment in order to facilitate equitable, rapid and affordable access to and realize higher rates of vaccination and lower fatalities;

Stressed the importance of proactively preparing the region to rapidly and effectively respond to future pandemics and in this regard, **welcomed** the proposal to establish a regional centre for health emergency preparedness and response with a view to encourage and promote regional solutions for the COVID-19 pandemic and other existing and emerging health related challenges and **appreciated** the offer of the Republic of Sudan to host the centre in Khartoum;

Tasked the IGAD Secretariat to mobilize the required resources to undertake scientific research in the region in the area of health including the development of a vaccine for COVID-19;

On Somalia;

Congratulated H.E. President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble, the leaders of the five regional states and aspiring candidates for arriving at a consensus that ended the long-standing impasse and laid a roadmap to the presidential and parliamentary elections in Somalia and **assured** the leadership and people of Somalia of the full support of IGAD;

Welcomed the historic outcomes of the Somali-led and Somali-owned dialogue and **reaffirmed support** for an inclusive and credible elections process based on the Agreements of 17th September 2020 and 27th May 2021, and towards this end **urged** all stakeholders in Somalia to continue the dialogue in the spirit of collegiality and compromise and exude wisdom and leadership;

Appreciated the progress in the implementation of the elections process Agreements and extends its full support to Prime Minister of Somalia Mohamed Roble and all the stakeholder;

Called upon international partners to provide the necessary technical and financial resources for Somalia to implement the Agreements and hold peaceful, credible and all-inclusive elections; and

Urged IGAD, AU, UN and the international community to redouble their concerted efforts in supporting the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Somalia in the fight against Al-Shabab;

On Durable Solutions for Displaced Populations in South Sudan and Sudan

Appreciated the positive contribution that peace processes in the IGAD region particularly in the Republics of Sudan and South Sudan have made towards creating conditions conducive for voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of displaced populations;

Welcomed the extension of the IGAD support platform to accommodate the displaced populations in Sudan and South Sudan within the framework of the Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Refugees and Reintegration of Returnees and its accompanying Plan of Action;

Commended the partnership between IGAD and UNHCR to roll out “people-centred approach” that prioritizes the rehabilitation and recovery needs in order to arrive at lasting solutions for the 7 million displaced persons across Sudan and South Sudan; and

Urged all partners and the international community to provide material, financial and technical support to the Durable Solutions Initiative for refugees and IDPs in Sudan and South Sudan in particular and the region as a whole;

On the Protocols on Free Movement of Persons and Transhumance

Reaffirmed IGAD's continued and strong commitment to the implementation of Article 13 (a) of the Agreement Establishing IGAD on key areas of cooperation requiring instruments for the furtherance of regional economic integration;

Recalled the ministerial endorsement on 26th February 2020 of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons in the IGAD Region by the Ministers-in-charge of Internal Affairs and Labour and the endorsement of the Protocol on Transhumance on 27th February 2020 by the IGAD Committee of Ambassadors in Khartoum Republic of Sudan;

Adopted the Protocols on Free Movement of Persons in the IGAD Region and Transhumance and their accompanying roadmaps for Implementation by IGAD Member States; and

Decided to remain actively seized of these matters.

Done on 24th June 2021