



## **CALL FOR ACTION**

### **11<sup>th</sup> IGAD HEALTH MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE MEETING ON RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

---

**We, the Health Ministers of IGAD Member States convening via videoconference at the meeting to discuss the regional response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2020;**

- 1. Recalling** the recommendations of the First and Second Conferences on Public Health in the Horn of Africa held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 1996 and 1998, for the improvement of HIV and AIDS control among vulnerable populations in the IGAD Region, recommendations from Ministerial meeting on health held in Djibouti in November 2006, the recommendations of the First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Ministerial Committee meetings on Health and HIV & AIDS held in Nairobi, Kampala, Addis Ababa, Nairobi and Addis Ababa in March 2007, January 2008, February 2009, March 2010 and December 2010 respectively, the recommendations of the First IGAD Conference on Health held in Addis Ababa in December 2014; **the recommendations of 9<sup>th</sup> IGAD Ministerial Meeting on Surveillance and Outbreak held in Nairobi, Kenya in July 2016;** and the **recommendations of the 10<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting on Refugee and Cross Border Health at Addis Ababa on 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2018;**
- 2. Acknowledging** the strong commitment to improving health and promoting the well being of people in the IGAD region including vulnerable populations such as refugees, host communities, IDPs and migrants by governments, communities and development partners, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2063 and universal Health Coverage and other Global Health Commitments;

3. **Deeply concerned** by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic which constitutes an unprecedented global health crisis affecting a large part of the world;
4. **Appreciating** the swift action taken by all the IGAD Heads of State and Government to contain and combat the spread of the Coronavirus and responding to the urgent call to collectively formulate a comprehensive response strategy to COVID-19 for the IGAD region;
5. **Recognizing** the current needs of the region to collaboratively combat the Coronavirus and provide projections of the urgently needed infrastructural, technical and material capacity for the duration of the outbreak;
6. **Alarmed** by the fact that the region may experience a higher incidence of severe forms of COVID-19 including within the young population as a result of overburdened health systems that are grappling with the existing load of diseases thereby affecting the capacity to provide critical care for severe cases of COVID-19;
7. **Aware of** the urgent need to integrate the needs of vulnerable populations into the national response system and provide access to quality health care services particularly detection and case management of COVID-19 and other similar outbreaks of pandemics to Refugees, IDPs, Migrants and Host communities;
8. **Mindful** of the importance of the IGAD Regional Health Program in complementing the efforts of the national health systems to respond to COVID-19 pandemic and other similar outbreaks in the region;
9. **Acknowledging** the extraordinary sacrifices made by health care delivery workers across the world and in the IGAD region to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and committed to provide the enabling environment for them to perform their noble duties;
10. **Welcoming and appreciating** the decision of the IGAD Heads of the State and Government to establish the IGAD Emergency fund for the control and prevention of pandemic diseases and strengthening of national health systems; requesting IGAD Secretariat to expedite the development of the Terms of Reference for the fund

**We hereby solemnly resolve to:**

**A. On the IGAD Regional Response Strategy for COVID-19 Pandemic;**

11. **Endorse** the outlines of the Regional Response Plan (RRP) to combat COVID-19 pandemic and its four strategic intervention areas namely; strengthening the regional and cross border coordination mechanisms, strengthening regional response system by including vulnerable population such as refugees, IDPs, migrants and host communities, strengthening the national response system and capacity development of national health systems;
12. **Task** the IGAD secretariat to expedite the development of the regional response plan based on the agreed outlines and national response plans of the member states;
13. **Strengthen** the IGAD regional mechanism to respond to the disease outbreaks by reinforcing the IGAD health program and establishing an emergency unit to respond to disease outbreaks /pandemics;
14. **Facilitate** the sharing of surveillance and detection information and evidence-based response strategies to the COVID-19 pandemic;
15. **Formulate** regional rapid response teams (RRRT) that can be rapidly deployed to support Member States' needs;
16. **Develop** a regional inventory system to strengthen regional mechanism to facilitate the rapid transfer of excess human resources, supplies and lifesaving equipment amongst countries in the region;
17. **Enhance** disease surveillance protocols at points of entry (PoE) to ensure proper screening and prevent re-introduction of the coronavirus from outside the region as well as transmission out of the region;
18. **Support** regional efforts to explore treatments and cures for COVID-19 and other Pandemic diseases.
19. **Establish** a regional taskforce of experts to coordinate and monitor the regional response to COVID-19 and other similar outbreaks;

## **B. On Strengthening the National Response Systems**

20. **Strengthen** the capacity of national public health systems to rapidly respond to COVID-19 pandemic through enhancement of the infrastructure for health services including the detection and case management capabilities;
21. **Commit** to protect the frontline health care workers in combating the COVID-19 pandemic through ensuring availability of the personal protective equipment;
22. **Adopt** a coordinated approach towards health risk communication, promotion and behavioral change for COVID-19 prevention and protection;
23. **Strengthen** mechanisms that facilitate the rapid mobilization, exchange and deployment of expertise on pandemic detection and control as well as sharing of best practices on surveillance, detection and response;
24. **Provide** the necessary health care services to address COVID-19 to cross border mobile populations and special groups such as IDPs, refugees, migrants and host communities;

## **C. On Establishment of Emergency Fund for COVID-19 and other disease outbreaks**

25. **Marshal** financial and technical support from local sources and the international community towards the IGAD emergency fund for the control and prevention of pandemic diseases and strengthening of national health systems;
26. **Task** the IGAD Secretariat to develop the Terms of Reference of the fund for the control and prevention of pandemic diseases and expedite its operationalization;

### **Commit ourselves to:**

27. **Coordinate and synergize** the IGAD regional response with the Continental Coordinating Committee of the Africa Union's Continental

Response and its technical body The Africa CDC in addressing COVID-19 pandemic;

28. **Mobilize and maintain** political will at the highest level of our countries in support of addressing COVID-19 and public health emergencies arising out of pandemic diseases;
29. **Work** in partnership with international, multilateral, bilateral agencies and institutions such as EU, WB, AfDB, IsDB, GF and the United Nations Agencies to rapidly respond to the COVID-19 and other similar outbreaks;
30. **Mobilize** the available domestic resources to scale up the response to the COVID-19 and other similar outbreaks;

And;

**Remain engaged on the matters herein.**