



**OFFICIAL REMARKS**  
**WORKNEH GEBEYEHU, IGAD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**  

---

**AFRICAN UNION COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING.**  
**12:00pm, Monday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

- Your Excellency, My Dear Brother **Moussa Faki Mahamat**, Chairperson of the African Union Commission;
- **Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki**, CEO of NEPAD-AUDA;
- My **Fellow CEOs of the Constituent Regional Economic Communities** of the African Union; - Our mother organisation -
- Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen;
- All Protocols Observed;

**Good Afternoon;**

1. Allow me to begin by conveying my greetings, that of the IGAD Secretariat as well as of the governments and people of the Greater Horn of Africa.
2. I am deeply gratified that we have been able to convene after a number of attempts to hold this meeting and further look forward to upcoming the Mid-Year Coordination Meeting scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> October 2021. IGAD welcomes this opportunity to meet and review the progress that we have made so far on improving the coordination between the AU, Regional Economic Communities and Member States.
3. Since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a renewed focus on international solidarity and multilateralist strategies to respond to not only the pandemic, but also the multitude of other transnational challenges we face as a global village.



4. As the African Union, RECs and Member States, the pandemic has given us the added impetus to work even more closely together to not only arrest and indeed reverse the spread of this pandemic, but to also build back better in a more integrated way.
5. IGAD takes note of the 2021 Africa Integration report and applauds the effort of the African Union Commission and RECs to track, monitor and evaluate the progress that we are all making towards strengthening our working relationship across the continent.
6. I was pleased to meet with the technical team that was coordinating the compilation of this report in Djibouti and discuss with them the findings and recommendations of the integration report. Our improved score from the 2020 Integration report is proof positive of our continued efforts to create a more prosperous and integrated region and contribute positively towards the realization of the goals of AU Agenda 2063.
7. In this regard, IGAD calls upon the African Union Secretariat and authors of future reports to take a broader interpretation of the indicators of integration to accommodate processes that drive integration from below such as informal cross-border trade, community peace processes in borderland areas, migration, health and education as productive initiatives that are tangibly contributing to deeper regional and continental integration.
8. By way of illustration, IGAD has made great strides in health integration where we have mobilized our member states and the international community to improve health service delivery especially along our border areas. IGAD has mobilised stakeholders to embark on a comprehensive program to capitalize on the potential of our border communities by improving border management, access to health services and ease of movement.

9. IGAD through its partners has mobilised funding, is driving infrastructure development and is providing technical support to our member states to not only ease the burden and toll the COVID-19 pandemic has had, but to build stronger and more resilient health systems. This support has also extended to the displaced communities in our region.
10. IGAD further continues to mobilize the international community on the importance of forced displacement and irregular migration within our region. I have just returned from a meeting at the UNHCR headquarters in Geneva, where we were launching a component of the IGAD Support platform for refugees and displaced communities in Sudan and South Sudan.
11. The contribution that initiatives such as these that seek to provide durable solutions to displacement make towards fomenting good relations across borders in addition to integrated emergency and development responses cannot be gainsaid.

**Excellency Chair,**

12. The success of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) relies squarely upon the free movement of people, capital and services within our continent. In this regard, IGAD is making significant strides towards realizing free movement region through the universal adoption of the IGAD Protocol on free movement and its roadmap by our Member States.
13. The IGAD protocol on free movement is a derivative of the AU roadmap on free movement of persons, right of residence and right of establishment.

14. Whereas IGAD is encouraged that 32 out of the 55 AU Member States have signed the Protocol on Free Movement, we are nevertheless concerned that only 4 have ratified it. IGAD calls upon the AU to launch a renewed campaign in collaboration with RECs and member states to fast track the adoption of the continental protocol on free movement by the remaining 13 Member states and the ratification of it by at least 11 more member states in order for it to come into force.
15. The recommendations of the African Integration report call upon the AU and RECs to accelerate the commitments and goals of Agenda 2063 and the Abuja Treaty by making improvements to our coordination and the harmonization of roles; It is therefore important that we sign the revised AU-RECs Protocol that will serve as the framework and guide of our relationship.
16. As was the case during the pandemic, the AU must strengthen the inclusion, participation and contribution of RECs in its decision-making processes through the Bureau of the Assembly and at the secretariat level. We call for more regular consultations amongst ourselves to discuss specific areas of integration on how we can work together to achieve them.
17. On the Division of Labour between the Member States, the African Union Commission and the Regional Economic Communities/ Regional Mechanisms, I applaud the progress so far made including the that has been recorded so far on Trade, Peace and Security and Political Affairs and further look forward to the conclusions of the report being tabled during the 35<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly in February 2022.
18. From this exercise it has become apparent that the Member States, the AUC, RECs/RM share many priorities and areas of convergence where meaningful work can be done.

19. This work is part of the overall goal of attaining the goals stipulated in the Abuja Treaty of establishing an African Economic Community.
20. It is important to remind ourselves that the division of labour exercise will only be successful when mechanisms for its implementation are agreed upon by all respective bodies including the Assembly. It is vital that the legal, institutional and financial implications be explained in detail during presentation of the final division of labour report.
21. To enhance efficiency and efficacy and avoid duplication of efforts, the AUC and RECs/RMs should look into improved joint planning to avoid and replace the *ad hoc* nature we have been working. By better synchronizing our work schedules ahead of time, at the beginning of the year, this can lead to improved convergence and even open up further areas of collaboration.
22. In this regard, I am pleased to report that IGAD is taking proactive steps in this direction. I had the privilege to hold preliminary consultations on the fringes of the UN General Assembly with Hon. Dr. Peter Mathuki the Secretary General of the East African Community on areas of specialization and collaboration between IGAD and the EAC.
23. It is also important that the Division of labour is cascaded to the people on the continent. The role of civil society and private sector cannot be understated and should be included in this exercise.
24. Looking towards the Mid-Year Coordination Meeting, it is my hope that we focus our outcomes on measurable targets, joint resource mobilization and effective working modalities that will ensure our success of a more prosperous and integrated continent.

**I thank you.**