



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

WORKNEH GEBEYEHU

IGAD Executive Secretary,

HANDOVER OF COVID-19 AND AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT TO MANDERA COUNTY GOVERNMENT, REPUBLIC OF KENYA

Thursday, 22nd July 2021

- The Hon. **Governor Ali Roba**, our Gracious Host and the hospitable people of Mandera County;
- **Dr. Rashid Aman**, Chief Administrative Secretary for Health, representing the Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Health;
- **Eng. Musa Sang'** representing the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries;
- **Mohamed Guleid**, CEO of the Frontier Counties Development Council;
- **Amb. Meles Alem**, Ambassador of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to Kenya;
- **Carla Mucavi**, Kenya Country Representative of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, FAO;
- **Dr. Fatuma Adan**, IGAD Head of Mission in the Republic of Kenya.
- **Dr. Solomon Munyua**, Director IGAD Centre for Pastoral and Livestock Development (ICPALD);
- Our **valiant health workers, brave security officers, members of the fourth estate**, Ladies and Gentlemen, all protocols observed;

Good morning,

1. I am truly honored, and indeed glad to join all of you for this **handover ceremony for equipment that will contribute to softening the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the health and wealth** of our brothers and sisters in Mandera County.
2. I will begin by **thanking the Government of the Republic of Kenya and the Leadership of Mandera County** for hosting us here today.



3. I also want to express my **sincerest appreciation to the stable of IGAD partners whose material support has facilitated the procurement and delivery of this important equipment.** To the European Union, the Swiss Development Cooperation, UNOPS and FAO, we say ***Asante Sana.***
4. Before I deliver my substantive remarks, let us all **take a moment and come together in solidarity and compassion** to convey our most **heartfelt condolences to the over 14,000 families in our IGAD region that have lost loved ones to COVID-19.**
5. At the same time, let us all together wish a **quick and full recovery to the over 644,000 members of our families and friends** who are infected with this virus as of today.
6. We **salute the courage and determination of our heroic health workers who continue to wage what I know will be a winning war** against this deadly disease.
7. Turning to the focus of our function here today, I am **delighted on behalf of the IGAD Secretariat to join hands with the Republic of Kenya, the County Government of Mandera and the Communities at this confluence of Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia as we strike another blow against the social and economic effects of Covid-19.**
8. Over the past year our message has remained consistent;
"Borderlands are the theatre in which the future of our region will be decided".
9. **It is along the borders of our Member States that battle against this virus will be won** because this is where we have the greatest movement of our people. Nonetheless, **it is also in our borderlands that we have some of the lowest levels of health, economic and social infrastructure.**



10. It has often been said that **COVID-19 does not recognize borders; And maybe this is because we have not sufficiently strengthened disease surveillance and response in our borderland areas.**
11. This event today and the series of other similar undertakings we are conducting across our Member States should therefore **serve as a warning to Covid-19 and other pandemics that we will be stepping up measures to protect our most vulnerable communities and geographies** from now henceforth.
12. IGAD began implementing our regional response strategy to Covid-19 which specifically aims to support most vulnerable brothers and sisters especially refugees, internally displaced persons and communities living in cross-border areas,
13. So far, IGAD has supported our displaced and cross-border communities with over **5 million medical masks, 1 million COVID-19 test kits, 4 million surgical gloves, 21 Ambulances, Utility Vehicles and Mobile Laboratories that have been distributed across 21 Cross-Border sites, 7 Refugee Camps and IDP settlements as well as 4 Migrant Reception Centers.**
14. In Kenya, this support includes **IGAD's 10 million cash contribution to the Kenya national COVID-19 fund and PPE'S worth 5.5 million** to Cross-Border Communities in Moyale and Dadaab Refugee Camp.
15. The Ambulance we are delivering today to the people of Mandera county is **in fulfillment of the promise we made as part of the consignment of 25,000 N95 masks, 25,000 surgical masks, 125,000 gloves and 2,500 COVID-19 test kits that have already been distributed.**
16. **Now the focus worldwide is shifting from prevention to vaccination. I was gravely concerned to observe that the African Continent may be left behind as the world starts to recover from this pandemic.**



17. For example, the level of **testing in the IGAD region is still very low at less than 2.5% and vaccination is even lower at less than 1%.**
18. In order to remedy this very grave state of affairs, **IGAD has spearheaded the procurement of 21 High-Volume PCR machines** that will very soon significantly improve the ability of our Member States to detect and contain outbreaks of the virus.
19. This intervention notwithstanding, **much more needs to be done; on our part, IGAD has formulated a COVID-19 regional vaccine strategy that supports the efforts of our Member States to procure, deploy and administer the vaccine** in our region, particularly among frontline workers, educators, highly mobile professions such as truck drivers as well as displaced populations such as refugees and IDP's.
20. IGAD will continue to engage the international community and our development partners on behalf of our people to **advocate for increased and equitable access as well as universal acceptance of all vaccines that are recognized by the World Health Organization.**
21. In this regard, **IGAD calls upon Member States, our development partners and the wider international community to further support our multi-lateral, multi-pronged strategy** to counter the threat of Covid-19 to lives and livelihoods in our region.
22. **Covid-19 is a disease that not only affects our physical well-being, it is also eating away at our financial well-being as well;** And it is this multi-dimensional understanding that Covid-19 is more than a health problem that motivated IGAD to also address the economic impact of COVID-19.
23. The **2 tractors and accompanying farm implements for the communities of Border Point 1 (BP1) and Khalalio are essential to containing food insecurity and safeguarding livelihoods** by facilitating the timely preparation of land in anticipation of planting seasons now and in the future.



24. I am **inspired by the spirit of ownership, equity and solidarity by the community** who formed a community-led committee that will take up the responsibility for the maintenance, fair access and usage of this equipment and by all members.
25. At this juncture and on behalf of IGAD, I would like to **sincerely thank the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC)** for providing the funding that has made these vital interventions possible, and **our partners at FAO** with whom we are working together to make the Community Investment Plans of the people of Mandera triangle a tangible reality.
26. IGAD is also indebted to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Irrigation who have played a vital role in establishing 10 Agro-pastoral field schools within Mandera County. **This support is crucial for building the local technical capacity in agronomics that will be necessary for the use of this equipment.**
27. This equipment will **complement existing livelihoods-support efforts across the 3 IGAD Member States of Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia** for our people living in Mandera, Dolo Ado, Dolo Bey, Belet Hawa and Dollow that seek to enhance fodder development, scale-up fodder storage, expand water infrastructure and improve irrigation facilities.
28. Furthermore, **in keeping with the spirit of “One IGAD”, I am delighted to learn that the farming communities at the confluence of our 3 Member States are set to benefit significantly from the climate early warning system** supported by the network of meteorological stations that are being installed within this cluster.
29. These automated weather stations will **provide the much-needed data for communities at the convergence of the 3 countries to have forecasts on the ideal farming conditions as well as climate hazards** in order to better safeguard their livelihoods



30. In conclusion ladies and gentlemen, this event today is an excellent example of an **integrated, state-driven but community-led development initiative that places the people at the center of the discourse on local cross-border policy.**
31. It accelerates the **evolution of our states and societies from being passive participants who are simply beneficiaries of development, and transforms us into active contributors and stakeholders capable of defining our common agenda going forward.**
32. **This is the true face of regional integration and precisely what IGAD stands for.** It is by facing health and climate hazards together, pursuing common objectives in agriculture and livelihoods and sharing the available resources and equipment **that we can truly breathe life into the treaties, agreements, strategies, policies and regulations that bind us together as a region.**
33. Over the past year, Covid-19 threatened to tear our world apart; but instead of allowing it to isolate us, **we will capitalize on the opportunities that COVID has created to bring us even closer together, especially here in the convergence of our countries** through stronger cross-border cooperation in development sectors such as health, agriculture and livelihoods.
34. IGAD looks forward to the scaling-up and scaling-out of more of these initiatives and interventions particularly **along our shared frontiers and frontlines of development that foster our shared vision peace, prosperity and regional integration.**

Thank You Very Much