



**WELCOME REMARKS**

**WORKNEH GEBEYEHU, IGAD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

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**DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS ROUNDTABLE MEETING ON THE IGAD  
REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE MASTERPLAN**

**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021**

- Our guest of honour, the **Right Honourable Raila Amollo Odinga**, the AU High Representative for Infrastructure Development;
- Hon. **Amb. Dr. Monica Juma**, Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Republic of Kenya;
- **Hon. Sicily Kariuki**, Cabinet Secretary for Water, Sanitation and Irrigation, Republic of Kenya;
- Hon. **Agak Manok**, Minister of Finance and Planning Republic of South Sudan;
- Your Excellency, **Amb. Magdi Ahmed Mofadal**, representing the Republic of Sudan and Chair of the IGAD Council of Ministers;
- **State Ministers** from the Federal Republic of Somalia and Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
- **Mr. Abdou-Razak Ahmed Idriss**, Permanent Secretary Minister of Finance and Planning, Republic of Djibouti;
- **The Director of UN and Multilateral Affairs**, representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kenya;
- Representative of the African Development Bank, **Mr. Hussein Iman**, Manager of Infrastructure and the Private Sector;
- **Representatives of IGAD bilateral & multilateral partners in infrastructure Development** – AfDB, European Union, JICA, the World Bank and UNECA
- **Dear IGAD Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen;**
- All Protocols Observed;



**Good morning,**

Let me start my welcome remarks this morning by **officially welcoming our Guest of Honour, the Right Honourable Raila Amolo Odinga**, the African Union High Representative for Infrastructure Development; Your presence here today is a testimony of the commitment at the highest levels to the integration of this region and the entire African continent.

Allow me also to extend our gratitude to the Ministers, Cabinet Secretaries and high-level representatives of our IGAD Member States present at this meeting. **Your presence here is also a demonstration of our solidarity and shared determination to connect our region through infrastructure** that will transform and uplift the living conditions of the millions of our brothers and sisters living and working in this region. I also thank our group of dedicated development partners who are with us at this meeting; **IGAD deeply appreciates the critical contributions you continue to make** to the development of the region.

We have convened here with the recognition that although infrastructure development is an expensive undertaking, ***more is lost by not investing in infrastructure, than it would cost us to spend on it.*** And this is because **after Peace and Security, the lack of infrastructure is the second most serious barrier to trade and development.**

Indeed, in recent times, **our region has been in a state of turmoil which poses significant repercussions for our overall integration agenda and regional infrastructure development in particular.**



The uncertainty fostered by the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia, the state of the governance transition in Sudan as well as the recent terrorist attacks in Uganda, **constitute a risk of eroding investor confidence in development programming and threaten to stall or even roll back infrastructure investments.**

I am **however encouraged by the positive developments we have witnessed in these areas;** In particular, IGAD welcomes the reinstatement of Prime Minister Hamdok and the restoration of civilian rule in Sudan. I commend the efforts that have been made so far by the friends and partners of IGAD who have working tirelessly to foster the constructive dialogue that led to this positive outcome.

IGAD is also addressing the situation in Ethiopia and **further appreciates the efforts by regional leaders including H.E President Uhuru Kenyatta who has lent his boundless energy to support the re-establishment of security and stability in the country.** Furthermore, we continue to support the Federal Republic of Somalia as it rolls out the electoral process and **proffer our sincerest congratulations for the successful conclusion of the election of the upper house of representatives.** IGAD remains optimistic that the upcoming elections of the lower house of representatives in December and the presidential polls will be conducted in a similarly peaceful and convivial manner.



Moreover, IGAD takes this opportunity to once again, roundly and unequivocally condemn all acts of terror and violent extremism in our region and beyond. Our position as IGAD is that peaceful dialogue is the only sustainable avenue to redress the grievances that inspire senseless acts of violence. In this regard therefore, IGAD is committed to continue engaging with all parties across the region to ensure that the necessary conditions for our aspirations of peace, prosperity and regional integration are realized.

In addition to the challenges in Peace and Security, **our region is also constrained by low stock of infrastructure** and as a consequence, regional integration has fallen short of expectations. The 2019 Africa Regional Integration Index concluded that **IGAD is approximately 43.8% integrated with 3 out of 7 IGAD Member States (South Sudan, Eritrea and Somalia) having the least integrated infrastructure on the continent.**

The data also shows that inadequate infrastructure shaves off at least 2% of Africa's annual economic growth. However, at the same time, there is great potential for gains considering that the **establishment of adequate infrastructure would lead to productivity gains by African firms of up to 40%.**

Our meeting today therefore **aims to create awareness, build confidence and secure support for the policy initiatives and priority investments as reflected in the IGAD Regional Infrastructure Master Plan (IRIMP) which was developed with the support of the African Development Bank (AfDB).**



The IGAD master plan identifies transboundary water resources, ICT, Energy, Transport and Infrastructure as essential segments to unlocking growth potential of the other development sectors in our economies. It will **help in facilitating trade and integration by bridging the gap in national and regional policies and strategies** and addressing infrastructure needs, including conflict-affected, remote and pastoralist areas.

Notably, the **IGAD regional infrastructure master plan is designed to contribute to the continental integration agenda** as reflected in the Abuja Treaty, the Constitutive Act of the African Union, Agenda 2063 and the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA). It is also instructive to note that this masterplan comes at a critical stage as Africa has begun implementing the Continental Free Area (AfCFTA). Notably, the IGAD infrastructure master plan **is structured to complement the implementation of the Protocols on Free Movement of Persons and Transhumance** which are essential enablers of trade facilitation in our region.

This meeting provides us with a unique opportunity to further realize the aims and objectives reflected in Article 7(f) of the agreement establishing IGAD to “**Develop and improve a coordinated and complementary infrastructure, particularly in the areas of transport and energy**”.

I therefore call upon all of us to seize the opportunities that regional infrastructure development offers **as a mechanism of strengthen the ties that bind us inseparably together in this region**, based on the principles of brotherhood and fruitful co-operation.



The discussions that we shall hold at this roundtable should reflect our determination to **build our capacity for collective self-reliance by pooling our collective resources on the basis of equality and mutual benefit** in order to achieve infrastructural and economic integration. I urge all our Member States and partners at this roundtable meeting **to support infrastructure development in the IGAD region as the highway and pathway to peace and prosperity.**

I will conclude my remarks by reiterating that “*When goods do not cross borders, soldiers will*”. In other words, **regional inter-dependence, especially through trade is one of the most effective deterrents of conflict.** In this regard, I emphasise that IGAD remains invested in regional infrastructure development as the avenue towards realizing the levels of inter-dependence needed to forge deeper unity and integration in our region.

**I wish you fruitful deliberations and thank you for your participation.**