



PEACE, PROSPERITY AND
REGIONAL INTEGRATION

OFFICIAL REMARKS
WORKNEH GEBEYEHU, IGAD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

**Handover Ceremony to the Ministry of Health, Republic of
Sudan of 3 Ambulances from the EU-IGAD COVID-19 Response
Project**

Tuesday, 1st February 2022



- **Dr. Haitham Awadhallah**, Acting Federal Minister of Health, Republic of Sudan;
- Representatives of the Ministries of Health from **White Nile, Gedaeref** and **Kassalla** States;
- Michael Sonntag, Deputy Head of Mission, German Embassy in the Republic of Sudan
- Honorable Representative of the EU Delegation to Sudan;
- Representatives of our COVID-19 Regional Response Partners UNOPS, GIZ, IOM and UNICEF;
- Dear IGAD Colleagues;
- **Ladies and gentlemen,**



Good Morning,

Let me open my remarks this morning by **reiterating the commitment of IGAD during our Mission here to Khartoum to stand in solidarity with the people and the government of Sudan** during this challenging time.

The current political impasse has undoubtedly had significant impact on the economic and social health of the Republic of Sudan.



Certainly, **the delivery of emergency health services and in particular Covid-19 prevention and response has been severely affected.**

According to the latest data from our Pandemic Monitoring Unit, as of this morning, **Sudan has the 2nd highest number of new infections and the highest number of covid-related fatalities in the IGAD region.**

It is in **recognition of the fact that Covid does neither respects borders nor recognizes political crises** that IGAD in conjunction with development partners continue to make concerted efforts to address the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in our region.



In particular, **IGAD has aimed to mobilize support for the marginalized and vulnerable cross border communities** including migrants, refugees, and mobile populations who are often **disadvantaged in resource allocation and most affected by regional instability.**

The IGAD Secretariat received funding from EU and AFDB to implement interventions at selected cross border, and refugee sites and migrant centers. **In Sudan, the identified beneficiary sites are in 3 states White Nile, Gadaref and Kassala.**



Already a number of activities have been carried out at these sites including:

- Appointment of a **national Covid-19 response coordinator and deployment of 3 focal persons** to cross-border sites to improve coordination
- Establishment of a **Rapid Response Team** of health experts deployed to target areas
- **Establishment of cross-border committees** in Galabat and Juda
- Assorted **PPE and related supplies** were delivered to all target sites
- Conduct of **25,000 COVID19 tests** in the target states



Today, we are handing over **3 vehicles as part of our continuing efforts to fight the pandemic even as we are brokering peace in the region;**

- **1 ambulance with advanced life support equipment** destined for **Galabat City** in Gadaref State
- **2 Basic Ambulances** destined for **Joda City** in White Nile and **Hamadayet City** in Kassala State

These should go a long way in improving the health outcomes of the people of Sudan in the face of the pandemic. Additionally, we are in process of procuring PCR machines to increase the COVID-19 testing capacity in the across our Member States.



Furthermore, **efforts to control the pandemic globally have been hampered by low vaccine coverage.** The abysmal coverage in the IGAD region is still below 10% as a result of challenges on both the supply side as well as the demand side.

- **Supply side challenges call for additional efforts to avail more vaccines to the communities in the region** together with the necessary logistical and health system strengthening support so that the vaccines reach the target population.
- On the demand side, **there is a need to increase the advocacy and awareness efforts to improve the vaccine uptake** in the communities in our region



- The emergence of new variants just as the world was returning to some normalcy should remind us of the urgent need for vaccine equity: **“no-one is safe until all of us are safe.”**

In conclusion, I would like to **reiterate the IGAD Secretariat’s commitment to work hand in hand with our Member States to coordinate pandemic response in the region** and also to mobilize the necessary financial and technical support to fight this pandemic especially among the vulnerable populations in the region.

Thank you very much.