



OPENING STATEMENT WORKNEH GEBEYEHU, IGAD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

**Breakfast Briefing to the Diplomatic Corps
on the IGAD Leadership Academy
8th April 2022
Nairobi, Kenya**

**"Because politics matters,
Because leadership matters more,
and
Because political leadership matters most".**

Good morning Your Excellencies and thank you very much for honouring our invitation to attend this breakfast in which you will have the opportunity to contribute in charting the future of our region alongside IGAD.

My remarks today will be **structured as structured along the 5 "W's" + "H" Framework**. In other words, WHY, WHAT, WHO, WHEN, WHERE and HOW.

The most important of these is WHY. Without WHY the reason for the existence of the IGAD Leadership Academy cannot be justified. Kindly allow me to elaborate;

The WHY; Rationale for the IGAD Leadership Academy

The future is determined by those who plan for it in the present. I am very happy that you have heeded our call to participate in shaping the destiny of our region by **moulding and mentoring** the young people who will be making the decisions that will **fulfil the destiny of peace, prosperity and regional integration** that the founding fathers of IGAD committed to realize.

Correspondingly, **IGAD is committed to mentor and train the next generation of regional leaders** in order to improve peace and security, strengthen democratic governance, respect for human rights, rule of law and enhance peace and security across our region.

History is a witness that African states have made significant strides going forward since gaining independence. **However, this progressive march has also been interrupted by setbacks that are attributed to challenges in leadership.**

I say partially because the African continent in general, and the IGAD region in particular is a **victim of the shortcomings** in the international political and economic system.

Your Excellencies Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we speak, we know that the whole world is **facing a crisis of leadership**. We are living in the shadow of the golden age of international cooperation that was responsible for the human race overcoming collective threats to our safety, security and destiny.

This is not a criticism against our current leaders but a reflection of the society that we live in. Before the age of information, misinformation and dis-information, societies had the opportunity to stay a step ahead of technology and mould leaders oriented to serve the greater good.

It is with some dismay that we observe the unlimited access to communication technology has created opportunities for members of society to **mobilize themselves into leadership without the accompanying socialization** into what leadership really means. In other words, there is an abundance of leadership aptitude but a shortage of leadership attitude.

As a consequence, leadership in the view of IGAD is all about **self-sacrificing vision, and not self-promoting intentions.**

As IGAD, we draw our inspiration from the culture that defines our region and through this leadership academy seek to transfer the wisdom of our fore fathers in **grooming the next generation of leaders that will play a significant role in addressing and resolving the challenges of our region** on one hand; and on the other hand, identifying and seizing the opportunities that are not easily detected in the future.

Let me now pivot to WHAT we hope the leadership Academy will achieve

Our region is **extremely vulnerable and subject to** Political instability, unemployment and underemployment, underdeveloped physical & social infrastructure, fiscal & economic volatility and less than ideal levels of prevention and response to disasters.

Whereas these conditions are common worldwide, the factors driving them in the IGAD region are **unique to our circumstances**.

As a result, this calls for **tailor-made solutions** that are responsive, efficient, effective, and relevant to our setting. The 'center of gravity' for the resolution of these challenges is to be found within the realm of leadership. Our experience in IGAD has shown us that **addressing the root causes**, triggers and drivers of the region's problems is a function of the political will needed to anticipate, avert and mitigate the existential threats within the region.

This Political will is lodged at two levels; first vertically within countries of our region and secondly, horizontally across our region as well.

As IGAD, we subscribe to the admirable philosophy of African Solutions to African Problems but through this Leadership Academy and our mandate as a multilateral institution, **we subscribe more to the notion of common solutions to the problem that afflict us all without discrimination.**

The Alumni of the IGAD leadership Academy will be trained in a **3-stage process** that calls upon them as torchbearers to;

- First of all, **fire up the collective imagination**;
- Secondly, **forge this collective imagination into a set of shared aspirations**;
- And third, **marshal these shared aspirations into common action**.
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The Leadership Academy will therefore correct the prevailing leadership limitations in our region **where much is promised but little is delivered**.

Let me now punctuate these too may "W"s with the one "H"-HOW; The IGAD Leadership Academy will be structured to run 2 leadership programs that shall correspond to the supply and demand sides of leadership respectively;

i. **Leadership and Integrity**— This program will focus on the supply side of leadership, specifically the "Voice" aspect of leadership.

This program will **specialize in providing candidates with training on critical & strategic thinking, ethics and integrity** in order to inculcate a culture of inspiring, innovative and values-driven leadership.

ii. **Democracy, Governance and Human rights**— This program will be dedicated to the demand side of leadership or the "Hearing" aspect of Leadership. The intention here will be to **promote servant-leadership more attuned to the needs and aspirations of citizens**.

In this regard, democracy is the principal political model that is designed to open dialogue between leaders and the everyman; therefore, **strengthening democracy, promoting human rights, enhancing access to justice and prioritising accountable and transparent**



governance will be vital components of this leadership programs.

Going back to the "W"s, - WHO are the ideal candidates for the Leadership Academy?

We target to identify, recruit, groom and equip future political leaders with the critical skill sets necessary to both chart and steer the course of a rapidly developing multi-cultural African society in the 21st century.

As an established regional organization with a proven track record on governance, peace and security, **as well as being fully mandated and permanently invested in the future of this region**, it is in the interest of IGAD to build a critical mass of visionary, strategic, ethical leaders.

Our hope is that the Alumni of the Academy will inspire change and drive the transformation that the greater horn of Africa will rely upon to deliver the intentions articulated the development visions of its **constituent Member States at national level, the IGAD strategy 2050 at regional level and the AU agenda 2063 at continental level.**

The leaders generated by the Academy will **constitute the 'critical few'** the region needs to drive transformational change **on behalf of the 'fundamental majority'** in the public, private and civil society theaters and further **cement the reputation of IGAD** as a rational actor within the international system.

And now, to WHERE:

The IGAD Leadership Academy will be located in the Republic of Kenya. The Kenya School of Government has graciously offered to host the IGAD Leadership Academy in its formative years with the intention of the Academy becoming a fully independent institution.



Your Excellencies ladies and gentlemen,

I will conclude with WHEN. In December of **last year at the 2nd Annual State of the Region Address** I announced the launch of this Institution.

I am also **delighted to report that we have approached His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya to be the patron** of this Leadership Academy, in his personal capacity as he transitions to becoming an elder statesman for our region.

Under his patronage, **IGAD expects to continuously groom a strong cadre of visionary, next-generation leaders in the greater Horn of Africa** who are committed to raising the status of the region.

The Leadership Academy will **inculcate a culture of good leadership by equipping candidates with critical thought-and-practice leadership skills, knowledge, networks and mentorship safety-nets** necessary to navigate a rapidly changing public policy terrain and drive Africa's political, social and economic transformation in the 21st Century.

In this regard, **I invite all of you here present to join hands with us and support this novel initiative** that will be of mutual benefit to our region, provide a head-start for the current and next generation of the leadership of you, our partners, and deliver the best outcomes for the greater good of the entire human race

I now **invite the technical team to walk us through the detailed 7-fold objectives, scope and structure** of the IGAD Leadership Academy.

Thank You Very Much.



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