



PEACE, PROSPERITY AND
REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Official Remarks

WORKNEH GEBEYEHU, IGAD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Ministerial Meeting to Review Response to the Current Drought

Situation in the IGAD Region

13th May 2022

Nairobi, Kenya



- Your Excellency and our Host, **Prof. Margaret Kobia**, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Public Service, Gender, Senior Citizens Affairs and Special Programmes, Republic of Kenya
- Your Excellency, **Najmaldin Musa Abdul Karim**, General Commissioner representing the Republic of Sudan and Chair of IGAD;
- Your Excellencies, **Honourable Ministers from IGAD Member States**;
- Our esteemed **Bilateral and Multilateral partners** in Humanitarian Response and Development Programming;
- Valued Members of the **4th Estate**;
- My Dear Members of the **IGAD Family**;
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**, all Protocols observed,



Good morning and **welcome to the beautiful and rapidly changing city of Nairobi**, host to this Ministerial Meeting to review the regional response to the imminent drought in the IGAD Region.

Introduction

A few weeks ago, on the 11th of April, **we stood here in this very venue and issued a dire disaster warning** on the escalating drought situation in our region.

It is **most reassuring that our leadership listened keenly to this warning** and swung into action immediately by committing to come together to formulate a collective response to this crisis.



The presence of our honourable Ministers here alongside our international partners, is **proof positive that our message was heard** and we have joined hands to respond to the situation before it assumes catastrophic proportions.

Drought response is the core mandate of IGAD; it is the **very reason that our leaders formed this organisation 36 years ago** when **our region was devastated by the worst drought and famine conditions in living memory.**



And I am **glad today that IGAD continues to exist to predict, prevent and respond to regional disasters.** I am **even more encouraged to note that we took the lessons of the drought of 2011 – 2012 to heart** and initiated a more effective response that saved millions of lives when another drought situation struck our region in 2016 – 2017.

Indeed, **this is the third time we are acting in concert in response to the risk of drought and famine** in our region, having issued an effective early warning in 2021, that **galvanised international action and prevented the escalation to famine conditions.**



We are now once again called to action for the 4th time in 10 years as we face the prospect of rains failing for a 4th consecutive season, resulting in the most prolonged drought our region will have experienced in 40 years.

Alarming, the resulting acute levels of food insecurity caused by the drought are coupled with other stress factors such as; **active conflict situations** both in our region and Europe, the **impact of COVID-19, flooding and displacement**, the enduring **impact of the desert locust invasion** and many other **macro-economic challenges** that are putting pressure on our States and Societies.



Situational Analysis & Forecast

In the 3 weeks that have passed since we issued the last warning, **the numbers of our brothers and sisters in need of humanitarian assistance has risen sharply.**

The most current estimates by experts across our Member States shows that across the IGAD region, **approximately 40.4 million people are facing high levels of food insecurity.**

This is an increase by 30% from the 29 million that had been recorded at the beginning of April. In **Ethiopia**, it is estimated **8.1 million people** are food insecure, here in **Kenya** it is **3.5 million;**



Somalia has **7.7 million** vulnerable people and **South Sudan** is home to **8.9 million**; the Republic of **Sudan** has reported **10.6 million** food insecure citizens and finally, **Uganda** has **1.6 million** people who are likely to sleep hungry tonight.

Call To Action

3 weeks ago, I emphasised that **We have to act NOW and act QUICKLY on the basis of a “no regrets” approach.**

I repeat those words again today.



I reiterate the call we made for an immediate increase of the emergency response across the entire IGAD region, with **a specific appeal for a total of 6.3 billion US Dollars**, to address the drought situation in the region.

This is **in addition to putting in place disaster forecasting, prevention and mitigation mechanisms.**

From this kitty, Djibouti's needs stand at USD 40 million, Ethiopia USD 960 million, Kenya USD 180.7 million, Somalia USD 1.8 billion, South Sudan USD 1.7 billion, Sudan 1.6 billion and Uganda USD 6.7 million.



Unlike in 2011-2012 where 71% of the funding appeal was fulfilled, **the funding situation this time is reversed with a substantial shortfall of 75%**. Of the USD 6.3 billion that has been requested, **only 1.6 billion has been mobilised**, meaning we still need USD 4.7 billion to avert this looming disaster.

I therefore appeal to the respective governments, humanitarian partners, and international donors, **to direct all efforts towards mobilising the necessary resources to prevent a further worsening of the humanitarian crisis in our region.**



Aside from these immediate short-term measures, IGAD believes that **“prevention is better than cure, and anticipation is the mother of prevention.”**

In this regard, we urge our Member States, Partners and Friends of IGAD to lend their **support to our longer-term measures to predict and prevent disasters before they happen.**

We invite all stakeholders to subscribe to the implementation of our Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Management 2020-2030



We also invite your **support in the rolling out of the IGAD Food Security Strategy** which at its core, seeks to build the regional capacity to build, store and distribute regional strategic food reserves especially in times of crisis.

Furthermore, the food security strategy also seeks to **encourage the diversification, uptake and adoption of alternative food sources** including those from freshwater and marine resources

These comprehensive disaster reduction and management strategies will go a long way in strengthening IGAD and our Member States, **as we strive to attain effective levels of disaster preparedness and the resilience capacity to 'Build Back Bigger, Bolder and Better'.**



The first and most practical step and a sure sign of your commitment is to contribute to the IGAD Disaster Response Fund (IDRF), that was established by a decision of the 38th Extraordinary Assembly of IGAD Heads of State and Government held on 20th December 2020 in the Republic of Djibouti.

I call upon our Member States here present to **honour the commitments that were made regarding annual contributions to this regional fund** that will provide the much-needed seed-capital for resilience investments.

A second and far-sighted step is to **strengthen the regional climate forecasting and multi-hazard early warning systems.**



In this regard, there are two immediate actions available to us. The first is **initiating the IGAD Disaster Operation Centre** that was established by the 38th Extraordinary Assembly; And **the second is to institutionalize the IGAD-led Food Security and Nutrition Working Group**.

Combined, these two critical actions will enhance the provision of disaster early warning particularly on drought and famine situations in our region through continuous situation analysis and forecasting. I commend these 3 proposals to you for consideration.



As I come to the conclusion of my remarks, I would also like to once again **heartfully thank our honourable ministers together with the technical teams and our partners** who convened at this meeting at very short notice. **Your commitment is in recognition of the gravity off the situation we are facing.**

IGAD **applauds your efforts and contributions** towards promoting the integration of climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development strategies into national policies, programmes and member state plans of action at all levels.



IGAD will **continue counting on your unwavering support** as we formulate and roll out responses to the threat of drought and famine and **work in collaboration to alleviate food insecurity** for vulnerable, at-risk communities in the Horn of Africa.

Thank you very much.