



OFFIOPENING REMARKS
WORKNEH GEBEYEHU, IGAD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

**INTRODUCTION OF THE GENDER EQUALITY SEAL
CERTIFICATION PROCESS**

**“Action for Sustainable organizational transformation towards
Gender Equality”
Tuesday, 21st June 2022**

- Madam **Tsi-tsi Fungurani**, Senior Development Officer, Global Affairs Canada;
- My Sister **Emma**, UNDP Country Representative to the Republic of Djibouti and Headquarters of IGAD;
- Esteemed Representatives from the Government of Canada;
- Distinguished Representatives from UNDP Regional Service Center for Africa;
- My Dear IGAD Colleagues;
- Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen;

On behalf of the IGAD Secretariat, it is **a great pleasure to welcome you all to this remarkable occasion**, where we come together to **forge a strategy on how to translate international and regional commitments** on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment **into a tangible reality within the IGAD Family.**



As we gather here today, I cannot underscore deeply enough that **Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment are the building blocks for lasting peace, economic cooperation, sustainable development and ultimately regional integration.**

Truly, **without gender equality, we have an unequal society.** And **justice cannot flourish in an environment of inequality.** And similarly, **sustainable development cannot be realized in an atmosphere of injustice.**

Therefore, in pursuit of equality, justice and sustainable development, a number of regional commitments and frameworks have been put in place including;

- UN Sustainable Development Goal Number 5 on Gender Equality;
- The African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights;
- The AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa;
- The Addis Ababa Declaration on the Enhancement of Women's Participation and Representation;
- The Beijing Platform of Action
- The Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women;
- And many more besides.

This event today is therefore **an invitation to explore all avenues at our disposal to address the challenge of gender disparity within our states and societies.**

Any successes we record towards achieving gender equality and female empowerment, will **heavily depend on the levels of shared ownership, accountability and strategic leadership.**



Therefore, **we are here to lead from the front** by jointly committing to be accountable as individuals and institutions **under the framework of the UN Global Compact Ten Principles.** We are to be champions of gender equality by **addressing the root causes of gender discrimination, of as well as driving culture change through the establishment of new and positive practices.**

In the adoption and rolling out of this Gender Equality Seal Certification process, **we as IGAD commit to achieving the Gold Standard in the equal consideration and treatment of both men and women.**

In this regard, **IGAD intends to become a reference point on gender equality for local and regional organizations in the Horn of Africa.** We intend to do this through self-assessment of those aspects of organizational change that are necessary towards achieving towards gender equality in our work in keeping with ILO Conventions.

I am therefore determined that this responsibility shall not fall solely on our Gender Program, but it will be an institution-wide, cross-divisional and inter-agency initiative. And in this regard, I count on all IGAD staff and partners to pull together in the same direction.

I therefore **direct that all professional staff must familiarize themselves with the 10 steps we must take to earn the Gender Equality Seal.** We must identify the personal responsibility each of us bears and the direct contribution each of us shall make towards realizing this important goal.



Consequently, I **urge us all at IGAD to begin by subscribing to the universally accepted Women's Empowerment Principles**. Let us commit to **use this process to amplify and codify the actions we have already been taking to improve gender mainstreaming and equality in IGAD**. At this point, I must emphasize that **it will be absolutely essential that we closely monitor and evaluate this process and its results**.

I am confident that **IGAD will prioritize the collection, publication as well as the quality assurance of gender-disaggregated, gender-specific and gender-sensitive data** that will **inform for evidence-based policy and gender-responsive interventions**.

As I come to the conclusion of my remarks, **I want to congratulate and commend everyone present here because it is a clear sign that you are all champions of gender equality**.

With all of you here, our work is already 50% done. Let us achieve the remaining 50% by working learning and building this change together.

I also **thank our partners at the UNDP who are the drivers of the Gender Equality Seal Programme** and the **Government of Canada for their support for us at IGAD in this transformative initiative**.

I wish you all a pleasant stay and a transformative discussion.

Thank you.