



**OFFICIAL REMARKS**

**WORKNEH GEBEYEHU, IGAD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

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**INAUGURATION OF THE IGAD SUB-REGIONAL CENTRE AND  
GROUND-BREAKING OF DONATED LAND**

**Khartoum, Republic of Sudan**

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

- Your Excellency, **Ali Al-Sadiq**, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Sudan and Chair of the IGAD Council of Ministers;
- Your Excellency, **Hafiz Ibrahim Abdel-Nabi**, Minister of Animal Resources;
- Your Excellency, **Haitham Mohamed Ibrahim**, Health Minister of the Republic of Sudan;
- Your Excellency, Lieutenant-General **Issam Mohammed Hassan Karar**, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Defence and Deputy Chairperson of the Organising Committee;
- Representatives of **IGAD bilateral & multilateral partners**;
- **Dear IGAD Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen**;
- All Protocols Observed;



I begin my remarks this morning by sincerely thanking our host, **His Excellency, Gen. Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan**, Chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council of the Republic of Sudan and Chairperson of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government for the benevolent invitation to **officiate over this landmark event to inaugurate this IGAD Regional Centre in Sudan.**

**I also take this opportunity to personally thank, Your Excellency, Ali Al-Sadiq**, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Sudan and Chair of the IGAD Council of Ministers **for the warm reception my team and I have received upon our arrival in Khartoum.**

I take this occasion to sincerely thank you and Excellency Minister **Hafiz Abdel-Nabi** as well as Lieutenant-General **Issam Karar**, for the **wonderful occasion we had yesterday evening to break bread together and dialogue on matters of mutual concern** affecting our region with regard to diplomacy and development.

This extraordinary generosity is **a reflection of the legendary hospitality that the Sudanese people are world-famous for and I have personally looked forward to and enjoyed on countless occasions in my 28 years in public service.**

***Shukr'aan jazilan my Brothers and Sisters.***



**Excellencies,**

**The reason we are here today to officially open this regional centre and the ground-breaking ceremony we shall hold soon hereafter, marks another significant milestone in our onward march to take IGAD to the people.**

The Republic of Sudan **as a founding Member State of IGAD and our current Chair unquestionably merits to host this regional centre.**

On behalf of IGAD, I therefore profusely **thank the Government and people of Sudan for the generous donation of this office building** in this prestigious neighbourhood of Riyadh in Khartoum that hosts this facility.

We also thank the Government of Sudan **for the donation of three-quarters of an acre of land strategically located next to the Ministry of Animal Resources** and near Khartoum Airport that will be **available for the future expansion of IGAD's footprint in Sudan.**

I am singularly **honoured to preside over the growth of IGAD's presence across our member states and raising the visibility of our organisation** from the grassroots to the international community.

Indeed, there is a well-known Sudanese saying that states **"Wherever the heart settles, the foot lands"** and **"When the fruit is ripe, it falls on its own"**.

**I am indeed very pleased to play my part in realizing this dream that begun 6 years ago** and was mooted in both the recently **concluded 39<sup>th</sup> Extra-Ordinary Assembly of the IGAD Heads of State and Government** as well as the **72<sup>nd</sup> Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the IGAD Council of Ministers held in June 2021.**



Similarly, the fruit has certainly ripened for **this development comes at an opportune time when Sudan is serving as the chair of IGAD;** and is a **solid demonstration of its commitment to lead by example.**

I am positive that **this commitment shall be extended to other critical areas in which IGAD is in need of Sudan's support and leadership.**

**Your Excellencies distinguished guests' ladies and gentlemen,**

**This regional centre will be a catalyst for regional integration from below** and join the ranks of the recently launched IGAD Specialized Centre of Excellence in Climate Adaptation and Environmental Protection (CAEP) in the Federal Republic of Somalia, as well as the other specialised institutions hosted by our other Member States.

The regional centre and IGAD offices that will be situated on the gifted land **will be the nucleus of the IGAD Mission in the Republic of Sudan,** assembling all our programs and projects in the country under one roof.

IGAD has a number of interventions and partnerships with the Republic of Sudan in the areas of Health, Education and building community resilience. **Let me take this opportunity highlight but a few;**

With the support of the African Development Bank, **our biggest investment as IGAD in the Republic of Sudan amounts to over 50 million dollars for the implementation the Drought Resilience and Sustainable Livelihoods Programme** that is being implemented specifically in in Gadarief, Kassala and White Nile States.



This flagship programme is **building the resilience of states and societies to drought and climate change shocks**, improving livelihoods and promoting regional integration along these cross-border regions.

In the health sector, **under the leadership of the Republic of Sudan and with the support of the European Union and the African Development Bank**, IGAD was the first to reach out to all Member States to prevent and manage the spread of the pandemic **through the Regional Response Strategy to Covid-19**.

**Specifically in the Republic of Sudan, IGAD invested over 3 million dollars in Doka town and Hospital near the border with Eritrea and Ethiopia** to improve health and water infrastructure for refugees and migrants hosted in this part of the country.

**Another 2.5 million euros has been used to procure personal protective equipment in form masks and gloves as well as 3 Ambulances and 1 mobile laboratory for the border states of Gadarief, Kassala and White Nile as well as 3 PCR mass-testing machines.**

With the support of the Global Fund and in collaboration with UNHCR, **IGAD is aiding the Republic of Sudan strengthen health services in cross-border areas** to combat communicable diseases, mainly Tuberculosis and HIV.

In the area of migration management and governance, we remain **a strong partner of the Republic of Sudan through the IGAD support platform for refugees**, in conjunction with the European Union, the World Bank, Germany, and UNHCR. This is a **trail-blazing** initiative as it is 1 of only 3 such platforms in the entire world, the other two being in Afghanistan and South America.



**Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Looking forward, **IGAD intends to commit 5 million Dollars through the Regional Migration Fund** to refugee camps in Kassala state and the Joda cross-border area.

We are also working with the African Development Bank on a project called the *Desert to Power Renewable Energy Initiative* where **the Republic of Sudan is set to benefit from an allocation of 1 million dollars** to develop and improve access to affordable energy.

**Similar projects are in the pipeline** in the areas of ICT and supporting implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Alongside these notable development interventions this regional centre and future offices will **complement the ongoing efforts in peace and security by IGAD and our partners in the Tripartite Mechanism that advocate and support a Sudan-led and Sudan-owned transition process** by ensuring that development interventions remain a priority, right alongside the political process.

From an outward-looking perspective, a stronger IGAD presence in Sudan **positions our Member State to host strategic projects and programs that will strengthen development ties between our region, the middle east and gulf cooperation countries** in the areas of health, agriculture and economic cooperation.

**This regional centre will therefore act as a bridgehead to opening, diversifying and nurturing new channels of communication, strategic cooperation and collaboration** with donors and development partners across the Red Sea.



**Your Excellencies,**

I will now conclude my remarks by **announcing the first action to be taken by the regional centre; it shall begin by animating the recently established IGAD Health Emergency Centre which shall be the anchor institution hosted by this office.**

Looking forward to the next steps, **it is our expectation that the Health Emergency Centre will stimulate the establishment of complementary regional programs** that will further cement the presence IGAD in the Republic of Sudan and the region at large.

On our part, IGAD **commits to continue supporting resource mobilisation efforts by the local team for the establishment and implementation of programs** that will be hosted in these premises as well as future IGAD offices on the land that has been so generously donated to us.

In the same vein, I **take this opportunity to call upon our host Government of the Republic of Sudan in its role as the sitting chair of IGAD to actively support the growth of this regional centre and the attendant offices for the pivotal role they are set to play in advancing our regional agenda for peace, stability, and sustainable development** through social and economic integration.

It is now my pleasure to invite **Your Excellency, Ali Al-Sadiq Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Sudan** to address this distinguished gathering.

**Thank you very much.**