



PEACE, PROSPERITY AND
REGIONAL INTEGRATION

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

WORKNEH GEBEYEHU, IGAD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

3rd Annual Meeting of the Project Steering Committee of the IGAD

Regional Migration Fund

1st September 2022

- Your Excellency, **Amb. Babikir El-Siddig Mohamed El-Amin**, Director of the Sub-Regional Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Sudan and Chair of IGAD;
- Your Excellency, **Moussa Aden Miganeh, Prefect of Ali Sabieh** and representative of our host, the Government of the Republic of Djibouti;
- **Mr. Marcus Von Essen**, Head of East Africa Division, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ);
- **Dr. Martin Knoll**, Senior Project Manager on Governance & Stabilization for Eastern Africa and African Union representing KfW Development Bank;
- Distinguished **representatives of the IGAD Member States**;
- Dear **Colleagues, Ladies and gentlemen**;

Good morning,

Once again it is a **singular honour and privilege for me to preside over this, the 3rd annual meeting of the steering committee** of the IGAD Regional Migration Fund.

Allow me to say how **delighted I am on behalf of IGAD to receive and host you all physically here in Djibouti after two years of confinement to virtual meetings** because of the restrictions that were imposed on us by the global pandemic.

IGAD **appreciates your continued willingness to commit your time and mobilize political, financial and technical capital** on behalf of our most vulnerable populations.

Dear Delegates,

As we all aware, Migration still remains one of the most pressing issues in the IGAD region and **it is actually the final manifestation of the complex and multi-faced problems** that we are grappling with in our region.

In other words, **“most challenges in IGAD lead to migration and displacement”**.

In response, I remain encouraged that **this regional migration fund remains one of the most reliable and visible mechanisms we have at hand** to address not only the challenges, but also the opportunities arising from migration.

For the last 3 years since its establishment in 2019, **the Regional Migration Fund has carved out a niche as one of the IGAD programs that directly addresses and intervenes to target the root causes of forced displacement and irregular migration** in our region.

This is **evident in the efforts this program is making to create real and tangible economic opportunities for migrants and host communities** along migration routes as well as improving their socio-economic inclusion.

In this regard, **the Regional Migration Fund continues to play an indispensable role in fostering the IGAD vision of development integration**, not only for our citizens on the move and seeking refuge in IGAD territories, but also for the communities that host them.

In December last year, I was **privileged alongside my good friend the former ambassador of Germany, Michael Haeusler, to launch key social-economic infrastructure projects and initiatives** for the Republic of Djibouti in Ali Sabieh and Ali Addeh.

Similarly, **I am very keen to witness before December of this year what has been going on in Moyale** with regard to the approved investment projects on Water Supply, Livestock Value-Chains, and the entrepreneurial support sector.

I am **particularly encouraged by the participatory and inclusive approach to development adopted by this partnership** which prioritizes community-owned and community-driven development projects.

I also take note and **draw your attention to the very important role that the RMF is also playing to foster community leadership through locally recruited liaison officers** who best articulate and represent the interests of Refugees, Migrants and Host Communities, who have often been left out of development planning and implementation in the past.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

In April this year, **IGAD in conjunction with KfW hosted a thorough-going appraisal of this project**, in which we conducted a comprehensive review of this initiative and further agreed on a set of detailed actions to improve and accelerate the pace of implementation.

At the practical level, we agreed upon the relocation of project intervention site for the Somalia-Ethiopia border from Metema-Galbaat to Tog-Wajaale due to important security considerations.

At the conceptual level, we agreed to improve the framework for future investments along migration routes and refine Participatory Area-Based Development planning.

Ladies and gentlemen,

These interventions have been **critical to completing the laying of groundworks** in order to **set the stage for the next phase of this initiative.**

However, we must **acknowledge the negative impact of Covid 19 as well as the other challenges and hazards affecting our region** have had on the pace of implementation.

This has **compelled us to over-shoot the 3-year implementation period that had been designed into this program**, which was supposed to come to an end in this month of September 2022.

As a consequence, I would like us to recover this lost time **by approving an extension period of 48 months at no-cost to the end of August 2024**, that will allow the project team to oversee the implementation of planned investment projects in the three intervention locations.

Esteemed delegates,

As I draw towards the end of my remarks, **let me thank the Government of the Republic of Djibouti - our gracious host**, who have tirelessly provided 360-degree support to the IGAD secretariat over the past 36 years.

I also wish to **thank the honourable representatives of our Member States for their commitment and readiness to provide the necessary leadership** as well as facilitating the involvement, participation and support of stakeholders in government and communities with regard to the implementation of these projects.

At this juncture, **I call upon our countries to actively contribute to the fund in support of projects** where intervention sites have been identified **in order to foster the much-needed sense of local ownership.**

I will also **express my sincerest thanks to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany** for the crucial financial support from the German Development Bank, KFW and the **Technical Cooperation and Support offered by GIZ** in establishing this Regional Migration Fund (RMF).

On the same note, let me extend my gratitude and appreciation to **Michael Haeusler**, former Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Republic of Djibouti, **who was very close to IGAD and supported our work in Djibouti and in the wider IGAD region.**

The partnership between IGAD and the Government of Germany is one of the longest-standing, built on a solid foundation of mutual respect and common interest. **We look forward to working just as closely with the incoming Ambassador when they take up their post.**

Lastly dear colleagues, let me **conclude my statement by wishing us all fruitful discussions as we reflect on the progress and the future of the Regional Migration Fund.**

Thank you for your kind attention.