



OFFICIAL REMARKS
WORKNEH GEBEYEHU, IGAD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
REGIONAL INTER-MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON MIGRATION,
ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Friday, 29th July 2022,
Republic of Uganda

- Your Excellency, **YOWERI MUSEVENI**, our gracious Host and President Republic of Uganda;
- Your Excellency, **SALVA-KIIR MAYARDIT**, President of the Republic of South Sudan;
- Your Excellencies **MINISTERS** of IGAD and EAC Member States;
- Hon. **DR. PETER MATHUKI**, Secretary-General of the East African Community Secretariat;
- Ms. **ROSE KOBUSINGE**, representing the youth and the future of our region;
- Mr. **UGOCHI DANIEL**, Deputy Director-General of the International Organization on Migration;
- Mr. **OVAIS SARMAH**, Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
- Your Excellency, **SAMEH HASSAN SHOUKRY**, Representing the Arab Republic of Egypt, the incoming COP27 President;
- Our distinguished **Bilateral and Multi-lateral** partners;
- **Ladies and Gentlemen, All Protocols Observed.**

Good morning,

On behalf of IGAD, I am **honoured to join you at this, the 4th Regional Inter-Ministerial Conference on Migration, Environment and Climate Change.**

I will **begin my remarks by thanking the Government of Uganda for hosting this meeting** and for the characteristically warm hospitality of the people of Uganda that we have been privileged to receive since we arrived.

Excellencies,

Climate-related Disasters and environmental degradation is **one of the leading causes of forced displacement around the world.**

Increasingly, **displacement attributed to natural disasters has been growing in scale, frequency and complexity** and continues to pose huge challenges particularly for exposed and vulnerable populations in fragile ecological environments.

For instance, **the IGAD region has one of the highest concentrations of displaced populations in the world.** Current estimates indicate that **the IGAD region has close to 14 million displaced people comprising of more than 9 million IDPs and 4 million refugees.**

To compound this challenge, **we are in the midst of the worst drought in 40 years,** with over 50 million or 1 out of every 5 of our citizens facing the insecurity of not knowing where their next meal will come from.

To make matters worse, **this is not just a food crisis but a health crisis as well;** malnutrition is at its worst among children, the elderly and women with over 19 million of these vulnerable populations in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.

Taking into consideration the additional challenges posed by extreme weather events such particularly increased levels of seasonal flooding as well as conducive conditions for trans-boundary pests and diseases; **it is evident that our part of the world is on the frontline of some of the worst effects of climate change**, in spite of the fact that we make one of the lowest contributions to the emissions that drive it.

Nevertheless, while the levels of climate-induced displacement are substantial within our region, **it must be also noted that conflict and human-induced disasters are significant contributors to displacement and involuntary migration of people and livestock in the region.**

I therefore **underscore the fact that it has become increasingly difficult to differentiate between human-induced and naturally-occurring disasters as immediate causes of displacement.**

Indeed, **one reinforces and drives the other in a vicious cycle of conflict, disaster and displacement.** Evidence from IGAD-led studies has shown that there is a strong co-relation between climate-change and conflict in the region.

IGAD has been vigorously highlighting the nexus between conflict, climate change and displacement, both directly and through our Member State representation in various international platforms including the UN Security Council.

Certainly, **the immediate impact of COVID-19 and the conflict in Ukraine, compounds the long-term effects of climate change situation.**

It is therefore **imperative that we must simultaneously have one eye on recovering from the global pandemic and resolving conflict and at the same time, keep the other eye firmly fixed on our efforts to the causes and impact of climate change.**

It is in this spirit that this 4th **Regional Inter-Ministerial Conference on Migration, Environment and Climate Change has been convened to enhance regional cooperation in addressing the vulnerability of our people to climate-induced displacement.**

From the technical consultations over the past two days, **member states and partners identified several key issues and proposed recommendations that seek to remedy the identified challenges.**

In this regard, IGAD is **privileged to have contributed to the draft outcome document that will be presented this morning for consideration and signature.**

Our **submissions drew upon our own experiences and interventions in building climate-resilience for states and societies in the region.**

In the run up to COP 27 later this year, the key lesson I wish to us to take with us is that **the challenge of climate change is bigger than any of us individually.**

Consequently, **there is a pressing need for us to keep working together in the spirit of multilateralism towards inter-regional policy coherence** in order to mainstream climate-induced displacement within regional and national policy frameworks.

With your indulgence I will draw the spotlight on **4 specific recommendations** that will contribute towards realizing this outcome.

No. 1: Establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Working Group between IGAD and the EAC on Climate Change, Environment and Migration.

This working group will be **charged with developing a Plan of Action for implementation of this Declaration**, monitor and report annually on progress of implementation by Member States.

No. 2: Address data and knowledge gaps in climate-induced displacement by investing in regional capacities for prediction and early warning, as well as **understanding and applying indigenous knowledge and practices** for locally-applicable climate adaptation responses for communities.

No. 3: Strengthen cooperation at all levels of government and communities to implement treaties, pacts, protocols and regulations on free movement of people, labour mobility and transhumance.

No. 4: Collectively Mobilise the necessary technical and financial resources to facilitate capacity building and technology transfer to address climate-induced disaster displacement.

Specifically, **IGAD supports the creation of a Multi-Partner Climate Financing Instrument to support both aspects of climate mitigation and climate adaptation,** especially among vulnerable populations and the youth in the East and Horn of Africa.

All of **these proposals are in line with the Joint Programme that IGAD is implementing together with our partners** IOM, ILO, the Platform on Disaster Displacement, and UNHCR.

Looking into the future, **this declaration creates the opportunity to enhance regional actions and solutions.** It provides us with the means to better anticipate and prevent forced displacement, and in the converse, support voluntary migration from areas affected by disasters and climate change.

Thank you very much!