



PEACE, PROSPERITY AND
REGIONAL INTEGRATION

OPENING REMARKS
H.E. Workneh Gebeyehu
Executive Secretary, IGAD
40th Ordinary Session of the IGAD Committee of Ambassadors
3rd October 2021

- Your Excellency, **Rahma El-Obeid**, Ambassador of the Republic of Sudan to the Republic of Djibouti and Chair of the IGAD Committee of Ambassadors;
- Your Excellency, **Mohammed Ali Hassan**, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Djibouti;
- Your Excellencies **Ambassadors** of;
 - Federal Democratic Republic of **Ethiopia**
 - Republic of **Kenya**
 - Republic of **South Sudan**
 - and
 - Republic of **Uganda**
- The **Deputy Ambassador** of the Federal Republic of **Somalia**
- **Directors of IGAD Divisions, Special Envoys and Fellow Members of Secretariat Staff**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It with great pleasure that I welcome you here today with my secretariat team to **this Ordinary Session of the IGAD Committee of Ambassadors.**

I will **open my remarks by taking this opportunity to welcome your Excellency, Rahma El-Obeid**, Ambassador of the Republic of Sudan, **as you officiate as the chair of this distinguished gathering.**

I **take this opportunity to welcome the new members of this committee**, your excellencies the ambassadors of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Republic of Kenya and the representatives of the Federal Republic of Somalia and Republic of Djibouti, **as well as our continuing members** from the Republic of South Sudan and the Republic of Uganda.

Moreover, we deeply appreciate the esteemed members of this committee **for honoring this invitation and taking the time off your undeniably busy schedules to make a contribution to the continued success and future of your organization.**

IGAD is grateful for the advisory role that this committee plays and stands to benefit from both the fresh perspectives that new members are bringing on board, as well as the endowment of members who are continuing to serve this committee.

We expect this meeting will enrich our knowledge and capacity to deliver peace, prosperity and integration for our region. **I reiterate the commitment of the secretariat to support all of our member states** in discharging this important responsibility.

Your Excellencies Dear colleagues,

My remarks today are in two parts; **first**, a brief analysis of the situation in our region and **secondly**, a short run-down of our corresponding interventions in the region.

As we are all aware, **we have a mixed picture when it comes to the peace and security situation within our region**; while we have recorded some gains in South Sudan and Somalia, the situations in Ethiopia and Sudan remain an ongoing concern.

As IGAD we have **remained actively engaged in regional stabilization efforts**. IGAD has engaged the leadership of our region at the highest levels to address the situation in Ethiopia in consultation with the African Union to bring parties to the negotiation table.

With regard to Sudan, our special envoy to South Sudan has taken up the additional **responsibility of coordinating the dialogue towards a civilian transition** in the Republic of Sudan **through the trilateral mechanism in partnership with the African Union and the United Nations.**

In Somalia, **the IGAD special envoy** to the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Somalia **has been working successfully within the quartet framework which brings together IGAD, the AU, the EU and the UN** to coordinate joint efforts towards ensuring peace in our sister member state.

In the Republic of South Sudan, we have also **recorded progress in the peace process with a scaling-down of conflict between the parties** to the peace agreement and the **establishment of civic institutions.**

Furthermore, **IGAD congratulates South Sudan for the necessary unification of forces** which is a very important component of Chapter 2 of the peace agreement.

Aside from peace and security, **IGAD has also working tirelessly to respond to the other immediate challenges affecting our region** most notably, **climate change as evidenced by the persistent drought, pest invasions and seasonal flooding**, all of which contribute to regional food insecurity.

In partnership with the World Bank WFP, FAO, UNDP and other partners **we launched an international appeal to raise funds to address this urgent issue.**

The drought situation is still with us in the region affecting over 10% of our population with 36.1 million people facing heightened levels of food insecurity, including 24.1 million in Ethiopia, 7.8 million in Somalia and 4.2 million in Kenya.

I take this opportunity to reiterate the appeal we have made to our Member States and partners to mobilize all the necessary resources to address this issue and avert a disaster in our region.

The covid-19 pandemic and its after-effects is still with us. IGAD continues to implement the regional covid-19 response and recovery strategy with the generous support of the EU, AfDB and GiZ. This project has been one of our success stories with **interventions in 7 high-risk cross-border areas, 14 Refugee camps & IDP settlements and 11 migrant reception centres.**

Our pandemic response has directly reached more than 1.9 million people, delivering more than 6.2 million sets of personal protective equipment, 36 medical support vehicles and 14 PCR mass-testing machines to our Member States.

IGAD also continues to drive regional policy processes and coordinate dialogue between member states as well as undertake capacity building activities. **This year alone, 7 sectoral ministerial meetings have been convened** so far on issues as diverse as regional infrastructure and trade policies, education, natural resource management and migration governance.

In order to have a more agile institution that is better placed to respond to emerging challenges, **we have been implementing an internal reform program with 7 priority areas** that include digitization, staffing structure and resource mobilization.

As a result, **IGAD is playing an increasingly visible and active role regionally and internationally.** Furthermore, we have **taken significant steps to be closer to our member states and communities** especially following the appointment of heads of mission.

I want to **thank all our Member States that have extended accreditation to the Heads of Mission** and formalized their status in the country. I **also commend those Member states are in the process** and remain confident that it will be concluded soon.

Your Excellencies,

Our meeting comes at a very opportune time and is a signifier of a return to normalcy and a regular routine, not just for us but also the rest of the world following an interval occasioned by a variety of external factors including the global pandemic that severely interrupted our daily way of life.

Our meeting is therefore a curtain-raiser for the resumption of ordinary sessions of the policy organs of this authority, beginning with the council of ministers and subsequently the assembly of heads of state and government whose dates will be decided in the very near future.

In this regard, **my remarks this morning will be tailored to sharing with you two things;** One, the performance of our organization over the past half-year and Two, the value derived by our Member States and communities from IGAD as your institution.

A technical presentation will be tabled detailing the achievements we have recorded and challenges we have encountered over the first half of this year.

Nevertheless, **I take this opportunity to share with you a synopsis of the important highlights over this time period.**

I will now turn to the second part of my remarks that provides a brief run-down of our operations in Member States and **provide a snapshot of our footprint and response to issues affecting the region.**

Overall, **IGAD is running 54 development projects and interventions directly with our Member States and another 456 projects in partnership with our bilateral and multilateral partners.**

These **projects are spread across 242 project intervention sites** in our Member States with **IGAD and partners working together to engage and empower over 208 local organizations** to assist in the implementation and roll out of interventions.

In the **Republic of Djibouti our host country** and headquarters of the secretariat, IGAD and our partners are jointly implementing a total of **83 projects** in **13** locations with **47** partner organizations.

One of the most important and ground-breaking projects is the planned new IGAD headquarters. At this juncture, I want to **highlight and deeply appreciate the support IGAD received from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia** to kick-start this project and I am confident **it will inspire support from our member states and partners as well.**

From the development perspective the livelihoods support project for refugees, migrants and host communities funded by the German Development Bank KfW is another highlight project that is directly impacting on the most vulnerable populations in Ali Addeh and Ali Sabieh refugee settlements as well as Dikhil, Obok and Tadjourah.

In the **Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**, IGAD and our partners in development are responsible for **93 projects** in **26** locations with **66** local organizations.

These projects **complement the peace and development work IGAD is doing in conjunction with the African Union in Addis Ababa including combatting transnational organized crime.**

Ethiopia is also the site of the proposed IGAD regional cancer and comprehensive health center which when complete reduce the need for our people to seek specialized medical treatment abroad.

In the **Republic of Kenya**, we are working side by side with our partners to roll out **271 projects** in **57** locations especially along the Turkana and Somali clusters. **Kenya also hosts 2 of our specialized institutions ICPAC and ICPALD** and is launching the **leadership academy** which will groom the next generation of leaders in the region.

In the **Federal Republic of Somalia**, IGAD interventions are supplemented by **31** local organizations to deliver **28 projects** in **20** locations.

In addition to drought & disaster response, marine resource management and maritime security, we are also **supporting livestock development through the veterinary school**, preventing of violent extremism and the reintegration of returning populations. Last year we were also **privileged to open the regional climate adaptation centre in Mogadishu.**

The Republic of South Sudan has benefited greatly from the role IGAD has played in supporting the comprehensive peace agreement as well as the revitalized peace agreement.

IGAD also has an office dedicated to South Sudan headed by one of our special envoys. In addition, the work of IGAD is rounded off by **56 partner projects** running in **37** locations with **31** implementing organizations on matters of natural resource management, disease surveillance and education.

The **Republic of Sudan** recently **benefitted from the opening of a regional center which will host IGAD programs and projects** in the country especially on regional health and natural issues.

The thematic areas that IGAD is intervening particularly in agriculture and environment, livestock-value chains, climate adaptation health & nutrition and conflict early warning are being served by **59 projects** with partners in **24** locations working in conjunction with **34** implementing organizations.

I also want at this juncture to **thank the Republic of Sudan for the scholarships from the University of Khartoum** that they have made available to gifted but underprivileged young people in this region.

Finally, the **Republic of Uganda** hosts **137 IGAD and partner projects** in **127** locations that are being delivered by **59** local implementing organizations.

Land governance, cross-border disease surveillance, migration governance and natural resource management remain the mainstays of our interventions in Uganda and we look forward to doing much more through the recently established IGAD Mission Office.

From this analysis it is visible that distribution of projects across the member states is not equitable and I am leading the secretariat to remedy this situation.

First of all, we are **auditing all new projects in the pipeline to ensure that they adhere to problem-related approach** that directs interventions to sites with the most need.

Secondly, we are **in the process of gradually re-distributing IGAD equitably operations across member states** and opening new offices and projects in those countries that are under-served.

Excellencies,

As you have heard for yourselves, **IGAD is doing a lot of work quietly all across our region and we need to invest more in our visibility to tell our story better.**

At the same time, **one of the biggest challenges we are facing is financing especially from our member states.** The funds you contribute to our organization are more than just money, **they are signal to the world and our partners of your level of confidence and commitment to IGAD.**

As my previous country summary has demonstrated, **for every 1 dollar that you contribute as member states, we are able to leverage 10 dollars from our partners.**

However, as we speak IGAD is running at a deficit of 34.5 million US dollars owed to the organization. Of this total amount, **24.5 million is in unpaid arrears and 10 million is assessed contributions for the year 2022** from our Member States.

The Republic of South Sudan holds the biggest balance of over 11.6 million dollars or 33% of the total balance. The Republic of Sudan is holding over 9 million Dollars, followed by the Federal Republic of Somalia who are required to remit 5.6 million Dollars.

The Federal Republic of Ethiopia has a balance of 2.8 million dollars, the Republic of Uganda is yet to remit 1.9 million dollars and we are requesting a further 1.2 million dollars from our host country, the Republic of Djibouti. The republic of Kenya has cleared all arrears and up to date on contributions.

We certainly understand that we are in difficult economic times worldwide; and this is why I want to thank all our Member States who have made an effort to address their arrears and keep up with their contributions.

I call upon us here to relay the urgency of our financial situation to our respective capitals and mobilize the necessary political will to regularize our financial contributions which are urgently needed to make a positive difference for our people.

The funds owing will be instrumental for implementing the ongoing reforms at IGAD, for instance the new headquarters, regional scholarships and awards programs and in particular provide a firm basis for instituting the principle of equitable representation in the staffing structure and the distribution of projects equitably across our member states.

In conclusion, I **invite this committee to closely consider these issues I have highlighted** as well as the information that will be shared in the briefings that will be tabled to this gathering.

We are relying on you to give the most balanced and effective counsel to the secretariat as we go about delivering on the mandate that has been delegated to us by you our Member States.

Thank You Very Much.