



PEACE, PROSPERITY AND
REGIONAL INTEGRATION

3rd State of the IGAD Region Address
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Executive Secretary
Wednesday, 1st February 2023

Salutations

- Your Excellency, **Principal Secretary**, State Department for Foreign Affairs Republic of Kenya;
- Your Excellencies, the distinguished **Members of the IGAD Committee of Ambassadors**;
- Honourable representatives of our **fellow citizens of the IGAD region**;
- Our **esteemed partners both here and outside the region** who have joined us online;
- My **Brothers and Sisters, Members of the IGAD Family**;
- **Fellow Citizens** of the IGAD Region;
- Representatives of the **Media**;
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**;
- **All protocols observed,**



Preamble

1. It is indeed a **privilege and honour to stand here before you for a 3rd time to deliver the State of the Region Address.**
2. Before I launch into the address, I want **to take this opportunity to express our sincerest gratitude to the Government and the people of the Republic of Kenya** for hosting us here in the enchanting city of Mombasa.
3. I also want to **recognize and thank our IGAD Chair, the Republic of Sudan** under whose able stewardship we have navigated what has been without doubt, a turbulent 3 years.
4. I also deeply **appreciate the commitment of our member states to** the cause of IGAD and their contribution to strengthening peace, mobilising support to address the challenges we face together and **keeping the flame of regional integration alive.**



Declaration on state of the region

5. It is my duty to report on the state of our region and I do so with a firm declaration that;

THE STATE OF THE IGAD REGION TODAY IS BETTER THAN IT WAS 1 DAY AGO, IT IS BETTER THAN IT WAS 1 WEEK AGO AND IT IS BETTER THAN IT WAS 1 YEAR AGO.

IGAD Responding, Resolving & Recovering from Conflict

6. 37 Years ago, the leaders of our region came together to fight the triple-threats of drought, desertification and under-development.
7. Drought and desertification were cast as immediate, prominent natural hazards that devastated entire societies and states, while under-development was identified as man-made hazard that threatened entire generations and posed a long-term risk to the strength and stability of our region.
8. Allow me to explain here; the **founding fathers of IGAD recognised that under-development is a symptom of scarcity and scarcity is a catalyst for conflict and violence.**

9. Time has proven them right. The conflicts that have affected our region, other parts of our continent and the world have led to **a mutual recognition that scarcity is not limited to natural resources alone, but also extends to national will.**
10. Peace and **the ability to address and resolve internal tensions is perhaps the greatest defence that states and nations can have** in these times of extreme political polarisation and internal strife.
11. **For the IGAD region, the surest path to peace is to deliver progress and prosperity through regional integration and unity.**
12. **We should be all commit to heart** the opening paragraph of the 1996 agreement establishing IGAD which places the principle of unity at the front and centre of our organisation which states and I quote;

“Considering the well-established ties of brotherhood and fruitful co-operation existing among our peoples and governments;”
13. **In these 15 words, lies the key to our integration; the acknowledgment that our individual dreams are best realized by our collective efforts.**



14. The agreement goes further and **charges IGAD first and foremost, to promote peace, security and stability, eliminate sources of conflict as well as prevent and resolve conflicts** in the sub-region as the pathway to national and regional unity.
15. Indeed, **this peace and security function is what has come to define IGAD**, and furthermore it is the changing peace and security situation in our region that has pre-occupied a lot of our attention.
16. I will now **journey with you through some of the key highlights of our recent challenges and successes and victories** in this arena starting with elections.

Elections

17. The IGAD region **peacefully and successfully navigated a 2-year electoral cycle** that ran from 2021 to 2022 in 5 out of 7 of our Member States. This included elections in **Uganda, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia** and **Kenya**.
18. **These peaceful elections demonstrate the growing regional commitment to the democratic process and the principles of constitutionalism.**



19. Let us agree that **elections are a very significant component of peace and security** but nevertheless, they remain only one of the many contributing elements to the regional stability equation.
20. Over the past year, **IGAD was significantly affected by 5 major peace and security situations** that dominated regional and international discourse and I will now turn your attention to them.

Ethiopia-Sudan Border Dispute

21. First, is the border dispute between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Republic of Sudan.
22. **One of the biggest victories for peace and security in the region was when IGAD held the 39th Extraordinary Assembly of IGAD Heads of State and Government** in Nairobi in July 2022.
23. This Extraordinary Summit **brought together** the chairman of the transitional sovereign council of the Republic of Sudan, H.E. General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan and the Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, H.E. Abiy Ahmed Ali **to dialogue, de-escalate and defuse rising tensions along the shared border area between the two countries.**



24. The **outcome of the talks between the leaders is undeniable proof of the abundant political will and commitment in our region to resolve conflicts** and disputes through peaceful negotiation and dialogue

Ethiopia

25. Secondly, the **conflict in Northern Ethiopia was perhaps the most prominent situation** that dominated the focus of international attention within our region and around the world.
26. Far from allowing the situation to worsen, **IGAD actively intervened and was instrumental alongside the African Union in brokering the agreement on permanent cessation of hostilities and silencing of the guns in Northern Ethiopia** that was signed in Pretoria, South Africa on the 2nd of November 2022.
27. This peace agreement was further reinforced by **the roadmap for implementation, including facilitation of unhindered humanitarian access to all in need of assistance in Northern Ethiopia and neighbouring regions** that was signed on the 12th of November following the 2nd round of talks in Nairobi, Kenya.



28. This **historical agreement is a signal of strengthened unity and a return to harmony for both Ethiopia and the IGAD region at large.**
29. We are most **grateful to the Presidents of the IGAD Member States**, who have been vital in building the momentum towards dialogue for the peaceful resolution of the situation in Northern Ethiopia.
30. Our region is **grateful to H.E. Abiy Ahmed Ali, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic of Ethiopia for his commitment to peace alongside the leadership of the TPLF**, who agreed to amicably and conclusively bring an end to the conflict that engulfed Northern Ethiopia and initiate the process of reconciliation.
31. Let me **also thank H.E President William Samoei Ruto** for his decision in his inaugural address, to designate former president H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta as a mediator to the peace talks.
32. Furthermore, **IGAD owes all the panelists from the African Union a debt of gratitude** for the monumental contribution they made towards restoring peace in Ethiopia.



33. At this point, I also want to **recognize and thank on behalf of IGAD, the friends and partners of our region including the EU and the United States of America** among others, who supported peace and mediation efforts to bring the conflict to an end.
34. IGAD **highlights the peace agreement in Ethiopia as a prime example of African Solutions to African Problems** and looking to the future, commits to continue supporting the implementation of the cessation of hostilities.

Sudan

35. Third, **the situation in the Republic of Sudan is still progressing towards resolution. IGAD is working in conjunction with the African Union and the United Nations under the patronage of the Trilateral Mechanism** to coordinate and support national dialogue towards a civilian transition.
36. **However, progress in this area has been gradual.** The intensive efforts of the Trilateral Mechanism **over the past year resulted in the political framework agreement of December 2022 between the military and a broad section of the civilian leadership.**



37. This January, a **second phase of talks among the civilian leadership was held towards building broader consensus** for the December agreement.
38. Looking forward to 2023, **IGAD remains optimistic that the civilian-civilian dialogue will arrive at a common position** on the roadmap to transition.
39. IGAD supports an inclusive and participatory consultation process and calls for the **broader participation of all stakeholders including signatories of the 2020 Juba agreement**, to which IGAD is a guarantor and remains grateful to the leadership of the Republic of South Sudan for its support.
40. Bearing these dynamics in mind, it is evident that the peace process in Sudan will benefit significantly from the increased political support of IGAD, AU Member States and the International Community.
41. In this regard, I **underscore the call made by the 48th Ordinary Session of the IGAD Council of Ministers for the initiation of a process to re-admit of the Republic of Sudan into the African Union**, alongside the lifting of any sanctions that may be hindering the transition process.

Somalia

42. Fourthly, we turn now to the **Federal Republic of Somalia which continues to make gradual and consistent progress towards stabilization**. The successful conclusion of elections in May is evidence of this process.
43. Regarding the **threat of terrorism that seeks to unsuccessfully weaken the unity of our region**, IGAD commends the government, security forces and people of Somalia for the recent gains and sustained efforts to counter the influence of the Al-Shabab terrorist group.
44. Let us also note that these positive efforts have not gone unanswered because the terrorist group has **increased its activities and attacked targets in even the most highly secured areas**.
45. 2023 is therefore a critical year for the fight against terrorism in Somalia. We call upon IGAD Member States and the international community at large **to scale-up support to H.E. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and the Somali National Security Forces** to finally neutralize the group.

46. Specifically, IGAD **appeals for increased regional, continental and international support for the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS)** which working together with the Somalia Security Forces, are positioned to have a more lasting and effective remedy to the problem of terrorism in Somalia, with a strong emphasis on the protection of civilians.
47. At the political and diplomatic level, **IGAD shall continue to work with our partners within the quartet framework** that convenes IGAD, the AU, the EU and the UN to coordinate joint efforts towards ensuring peace, security and development in our sister member state.
48. We also take note of the **recent tensions in Laascaanood at the end of 2022** which became a matter of concern considering the significant number of civilian deaths and casualties.
49. In this regard, the Somaliland issue continues to require our full attention towards a peaceful resolution. At this point, IGAD **appreciates the mediation efforts made so far by H.E. President Ismail Omar Gulleh, President of the Republic of Djibouti** and further encourages his continued engagement.

South Sudan

50. Lastly, in the Republic of South Sudan, **progress has been recorded in implementing the revitalized peace agreement**, notably the establishment of a fully functional executive, the transitional assembly, state and local governments.

51. IGAD also welcomes the **progress recorded under the Transitional Security Arrangements** and in particular, **IGAD congratulates the Republic of South Sudan for the necessary unification of forces of which 82% have graduated in the first phase last year.**

52. This **restoration of peace between parties to the agreement is a major achievement for our region** and IGAD is gratified to have played a significant role in bringing them together for the unity of the country.

53. Nevertheless, the **implementation of the other core provisions of the revitalized peace agreement is still behind schedule**, especially the constitution-making process and the conduct of national elections within the 24-month extension of the transitional period which expires next year in December 2024.

54. Moreover, **as peace is taking root in the Juba, IGAD is gravely concerned by the escalation in violence** in the Upper Nile and Western Equatoria States where hundreds of our brothers and sisters have lost their lives and thousands have been displaced, posing a further risk to the implementation of the agreement.

55. Looking forward to the remaining transition period, IGAD **commits to supporting implementation of the extension roadmap**, and shall engage with all stakeholders to ensure that they implement the activities remaining to the fullest extent possible before the stipulated deadline.

56. I must however caution that that progress towards full implementation of the South Sudan peace agreement has also been **hampered by reduced financial resources available to the IGAD-Supported Monitoring, Verification and Evaluation Mechanisms.**

57. To further compound this challenge, **the suspended Rome peace process** between the government and non-signatory opposition groups is a matter of additional concern.



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58. Following the consultations held in December 2022 between the leadership of the Republic of South Sudan and the mediators based in Rome, **IGAD urges for a return to the negotiation table and resumption of dialogue by all parties.**
59. In 2023, **IGAD is determined to ride the “wind of peace” that has been sweeping across our region** and promises to continue working tirelessly to resolve the remaining differences in the region.
60. I dedicate my time, energy and that of the secretariat towards the pursuit of peace as the topmost priority.

Regional Disaster & Humanitarian Issues

61. Nevertheless, even as we focus on tackling the man-made challenges, **natural hazards and disasters cannot be ignored or downplayed.**
62. And this is where I turn to the non-Conflict issues affecting our region that still have an impact on peace and security and stability.
63. **2021-20122 were some of the most challenging years in the history of IGAD.** It was one of the hottest, driest and most conflict-affected periods for our region in recent memory.

64. Rising to the challenge, IGAD worked diligently to respond to the challenges posed by the global pandemic, climate change, the persistent drought, pest invasions and seasonal flooding, **all of which combined contributed to a dire regional food security situation.**

Drought, Desertification & Displacement

65. **Let me start with the prolonged drought;** our region remains the grip of a relentless drought that has lasted the past 2 years.
66. **Now as we go into 2023, the outlook is still worrisome.** Climate scientists have issued an early warning that this year could be even warmer because the La Nina climate phenomenon which was cooling global temperatures is coming to an end.
67. It will be **most likely replaced by the El Nino phenomenon which is projected to raise temperatures worldwide.**
68. The **good news** for our region from this projection is that the likelihood of a 6th consecutive season of failed rains is reduced; but **the bad news** is that it is possible that our region could rapidly change from severe drought to severe floods such as the ones we experienced in 1996, 2016 and most recently in 2019.

69. These extreme changes in weather are of grave concern to the IGAD region. The drought **affected over 10% of our population, with 36.1 million people facing heightened levels of food insecurity.**
70. The drought also **wiped out an estimated 4.2 million head of livestock**, shattering the livelihoods of entire pastoralist communities and crippling them economically.
71. This is devastating for our continent as a whole, **considering that the IGAD region hosts almost 50% of livestock in sub-Saharan Africa and livestock accounts to almost 15% of our region's GDP.**
72. In response to these challenges of extreme weather, livestock losses and resultant food insecurity, IGAD proposes in 2023 to undertake a number of proactive initiatives beginning with convening a **Regional Climate Outlook Forum, 19 days from now on the 20th of February.**
73. This forum will be part of our continuing effort to remain the most climate-aware region on the continent and enhance the ability of our Member States to collect and process data for disaster forecasting, **in order to reduce the gap between early warning and early action.**

74. Al ready we have some evidence of the success from this approach. In 2021 and 2022 we noted with some satisfaction that **our initiative to “take the data to the people” raised the warning in good time.**
75. This allowed Member States, grassroots communities and international humanitarian agencies **to respond in good time to avert and minimize famine conditions.** This is a trend that must continue in 2023 and beyond.
76. The prolonged drought also **triggered large-scale population displacement with close to 2 million people becoming internally displaced** and increasing the refugee burden in the region because approximately **40,000 of our brothers and sisters sought asylum from hunger** in neighboring countries in 2022.
77. The active conflict in Ukraine has had a massive effect on the regional economy inflated the prices of food, fertilizer and fuel.
78. For instance, over the past 2 years food prices in the IGAD region **increased by an average of 55.6% compelling the neediest amongst us to spend over 90% on food alone.**



79. In 2023 going forward, this dire situation has inspired us to **review the IGAD Food Security and Nutrition Response Strategy** and align it with the current realities.
80. As part of this initiative, **IGAD will be investing heavily in food security data.** A starting point will be a region-wide census of livestock in order to have a clear picture of the situation after the drought.
81. The intention here, is to support Member States to drive evidence-based re-stocking programs as part of post-drought economic recovery for drought-affected pastoralist communities, inform a regional livestock fodder security strategy based in scientifically-derived feed balances and ultimately establish regional strategic food and fodder reserves.
82. These efforts will be supplemented by a number initiatives in water resource management including development of groundwater resources and the further capitalization of the blue economy.
83. As part of our ongoing efforts to support climate change adaptation and mitigation this year, **IGAD will be supporting Member States this year to access climate financing** under the Green Climate Fund founded by the 2015 Paris Agreement as well as the Loss and Damage Fund established by a resolution of COP27 in 2022.

Regional Pandemic Preparedness

84. Scientists have advised us that **Covid-19 is here to stay in the long term** in the same vein as diseases such as malaria, HIV/Aids, Tuberculosis and Ebola.
85. Taking note of this, the IGAD Covid-19 response project has been one of our biggest success stories with interventions targeting vulnerable communities and **directly reaching more than 1.9 million people**, to deliver more than 8.6 million sets of personal protective equipment, 36 medical support vehicles and 14 PCR mass-testing machines to our Member States.
86. Recently we had to contend with an outbreak of the **deadly Ebola virus** in our sister member state, the Republic of Uganda.
87. We heartily **congratulate H.E. President Yoweri Museveni and the national health authorities** for successfully containing the situation and making the sacrifices necessary to keep our region safe.
88. Looking forward to 2023 and beyond, we take the lessons of the past 1,000 days to heart, commit to remain vigilant and **continue building the resilience of the health systems of IGAD member states against future pandemics.**

89. Because of the urgency of this issue, **IGAD will in the next 100 days, convene the health policy leadership and professionals** in the region to continue the ongoing process of formulating a comprehensive plan to strengthen national health systems for improved regional pandemic response.

90. There are many more natural and man-made hazard situations in our region that I have not mentioned and accordingly, in 2023, IGAD will be laying great emphasis on **disaster risk reduction** and strengthening our **multi-hazard early warning** capabilities to also address them.

91. Specifically, we will be at seeking to **enhance existing early warning capacities and scaling-up to a fully-fledged Disaster Situation Centre** that will supply information on imminent crises to Member States in order to contain and prevent them from escalating into regional crises.

Regional Integration

92. As I stated at the beginning of this address, **the core mandate of IGAD has been and remains regional integration.**



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93. All the preceding work we are doing in peace and security, health and social development, agriculture and environment, disaster prevention and response is geared towards one goal: **To create optimal conditions for our people to interact, make a decent living and prosper in a peaceful and predictable environment.**

94. As one of the most important geo-strategic locations in the world, **our region has incredible integration potential that is waiting to be unlocked.** According to the Africa Regional Integration Index, our region is approximately 50% integrated, meaning we still have half-way to go starting this year.

95. **IGAD is further committed** as a Regional Economic Community of the African Union to deliver on the tremendous potential that the Continental Free Trade Area holds for the region.

96. I also know for certain that **the political will to integrate and exploit the latent potential of pooled resources exists in our region.**

97. On the area of infrastructure alone, **our region has advanced remarkably in the last decade with road, rail, sea and air links.**



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98. On trade we have also made **significant progress to lower tariff and non-tariff barriers** including the IGAD Protocols on Free Movement and Transhumance as well as establishment of One-Stop Border Posts.
99. These instruments lay a firm policy and practice foundation and establish an enabling regulatory environment for the successful implementation and realization of the tangible aspects regional integration as outlined in the IGAD regional integration master plan.
100. However, we are not maximising on our potential and harvesting the low-hanging fruit. This is why in 2023, IGAD will **prioritize the 'soft integration' strategy by focussing on digitalisation as a catalyst** of inter-connection and inter-dependence.
101. **In the entire history of mankind, nothing has brought us closer than the power to commune and share information and ideas** over vast distances.
102. IGAD's calling in this regard, is to ensure that the information needed to make strategic decisions at both macro-economic and micro-economic levels is readily available and accessible.



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103. Our aim is to make it easier for both stakeholders in the region to have the **ability to operate at the “speed of thought” because they have access to the credible data** they need at their fingertips.
104. **We must own our own data if we are to shape our destiny.** IGAD in 2023, will aim to significantly strengthen its position as a source and reference point for authoritative regional data on conflict, disasters and all aspects of development. This is so that we can better define our shared narrative and perspectives on regional and individual priorities.

Institutional Capacity to Deliver on Intentions

105. Since I have laid out for you an ambitious set of intentions for IGAD in the coming year, **I am also obliged to demonstrate how we will keep our promise** and more importantly, to show that the potential and ability to do so exists.
106. Let me assure you that the potential and ability of IGAD exists in abundance in the hearts, minds and hands of each and every one of our 270 million citizens. **You are IGAD and IGAD is you.**
107. The ability to deliver is also vested in our Member States. IGAD exists to serve your collective interests because you established it in recognition that **we are greater than the sum of our separate parts.**



108. And lastly, the ability to deliver on our intentions in 2023 exists because we can count on the support of our many friends in the international community.
109. Our outstanding **achievements the last year have shown that we do not take your support for granted.** Nor do you invest in IGAD in vain and we will in 2023 strengthen, deepen and broaden our international relations.
110. I want to specifically thank our international partners especially the United Nations, African Union and AfDB, World Bank and IMF, the European Union, Islamic Development Bank.
111. Furthermore, we are immensely grateful to our bilateral partners including United States, Member Countries of the IGAD Partners Forum that we co-Chair with Italy, Gulf Cooperation Countries as well new partners such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Turkey.



Policy Organ Engagement

112. In the past 1,161 days, **IGAD has enhanced its reputation as a rule-based organisation.** We are especially grateful for the leadership of our current chair, the Republic of Sudan who has convened and coordinated our Member States for regular policy level consultations and fostered regional policy decisions.
113. This is an **undeniable demonstration of the strengthened unity of our region at the highest political and diplomatic levels** to address the challenges that face us as well as charting the path forward to capture available opportunities.
114. The secretariat has **readily risen to the responsibility of implementing the decisions and directives of the IGAD policy organs.**
115. For instance, in 2023, we are looking forward to the accession of the revised IGAD treaty that will strengthen and revitalize the mandate of our organisation in the region.

116. Furthermore, **IGAD looks forward to playing a more active role in continental and international platforms**, especially the African Union Peace and Security Council as I stated at the recently concluded consultations between the African Union and Regional Economic Communities that took place in Nairobi.

Secretariat Roadmap

117. Even as we reflect on the burdens we bear and celebrate the successes of yesterday, **it is now time for us to look forward to the challenges and prospects that the Secretariat that will face tomorrow.**
118. These challenges are numerous and significant. Yet **the reputation of IGAD has been built on seizing opportunities and overcoming obstacles** and when we come together as a region we have never failed.
119. With regard to the intentions of the secretariat itself in the coming year, **our strategy for reform and revitalisation remains our true and faithful** guide. We are privileged that it has been further augmented by the roadmap for the chairmanship of the Republic of Sudan.



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120. 2023 marks the **mid-point of the current IGAD Strategic Plan 2021-2025**. We are gearing up to take stock of the progress we have realized and coming up with the next set of strategic intentions that will **establish a firm foundation for the security, development and prosperity of the estimated 400 million People** that will be living in our region by 2050.
121. IGAD's standing in the region, in the continent and in the world is well known and **the successes of the past year have further improved our stature.**
122. Going forward, we will be working to sustain and build on this reputation by improving our infrastructural capacity and raising the visibility of our work in keeping with the increased prominence.
123. In this regard, IGAD intends to commence the construction of the new Secretariat Headquarters building **which has been designed to represent the face of the region.**
124. I am delighted to report that IGAD has already received a most generous contribution of 2 million dollars from our friends and partners, the Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to help us get started and we sincerely thank the Royal House for this most timely donation.



125. This milestone is a reminder the **we owe a 37-year debt of gratitude to the people and government of our host country**, the Republic of Djibouti under the **leadership of H.E. Ismail Omar Guelleh** for the oasis of peace that has allowed us to discharge our mandate.
126. In April 2021, we broke ground on the **IGAD Cancer Centre of Excellence in Addis Ababa** and we continue aggressively building partnerships for its funding and operations.
127. I want to **thank the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and H.E. Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed Ali** for allocating the IGAD Cancer Centre a prime piece of land in Addis Ababa.
128. I also express my sincerest gratitude to the IGAD Partners Forum and the Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for their support to the cancer centre. I still echo my appeal to our member states, friends and partners to be similarly inspired to support this noble cause.



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129. Now turning to the theme of investing in our people, I want to focus on the potential and dynamism of our youth. In 2021, I recall **we launched the IGAD scholarship program** supporting young, gifted students from vulnerable communities to access higher education.
130. This is one of our best avenues for regional integration through education. IGAD urges all our member states and partners to **make your contribution to growing the intellectual capital of our region** and join the Republics of Sudan and Uganda who have availed scholarships in their institutions of higher learning.
131. From my personal experience, **I have come to firmly believe that** when young people from across the region share same academic plate, the future of our regional integration agenda is secured through the bonds of friendship that they will have forged in their formative years.
132. In the same vein, **I am pleased by the progress that has been made so far in bringing the IGAD Leadership Academy to life.**



133. I am confident that this year, with the support of our Member States and partners, **the IGAD Leadership Academy will induct the inaugural class of next-generation of leaders** who will in time, steer our region to even greater heights of harmony and progress.
134. **It is said that the best place to learn is at the feet of the elders** and IGAD as an organisation is always keen to learn. I am therefore **pleased to announce that later today, will be launching the IGAD Council of Eminent Personalities.**
135. This body is a brain-trust of consisting of 21 highly respected sons and daughters of the region, who have excelled in their respective fields of endeavour to gain worldwide renown and command international respect.
136. For instance, **our dear sister Derartu Tulu, is the first African woman to win an Olympic gold medal**, also became an even more widely recognised and highly respected regional figure, because **she stood as voice of reason and a voice of peace** during this recent period when conflict affected northern Ethiopia.



137. Her **peer members of the council are equally men and women of similar stature and reason** who were likewise carefully selected to serve as an advisory body to the secretariat and support the work of IGAD to amplify our regional message and agenda to the people.
138. These **eminent personalities are set to act as goodwill ambassadors for IGAD in local and international platforms** on various pressing issues including; Climate Change, Humanitarian and Disaster Response, Community Resilience, Peace, Security and Reconciliation as well as Regional Economic Integration. **I for one, cannot wait to welcome them.**

Financial Standing of the Secretariat

139. Turning to the matter-of-fact issue of Finances, I am happy to report that in 2022 IGAD recorded remarkable advances from our Member States to improve the financial standing of our institution.
140. I commend the renewed commitment of our Member States that have dedicated national resources to the work of our organisation in building peace, driving development and fostering regional integration.



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141. Considering that IGAD relies on a collective pool of resources to discharge our mandate, **I invoke the principle of reciprocity** so that all Member States that have benefitted from the investment of IGAD can also **demonstrate goodwill by making their regular contributions and regularising the outstanding financial responsibilities** and obligations.

142. My aspiration is that IGAD **by the end of 2023, IGAD will report significant progress towards achieving a balanced budget** that fairly distributes the financial burden to all Member States.

Conclusion of State of the Region Address

143. In conclusion to this address, **I am delighted to see that the IGAD family is re-uniting to overcome the deep rifts and tensions that threatened to tear us apart.**

144. **We have come this far together today and I know we will go even further together tomorrow.** I call upon our Member States, our brothers and sisters in the region and diaspora **to rally and join hands to share in the promise of our shared future.**



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145. Finally, we are now casting our eyes forward to resolutely seize the promise of 2023 and beyond and I invite each and every one of us to **take part in our common dream and prospect of a better, more peaceful, more prosperous and more integrated IGAD.**

I Thank you very much.