



## **OPENING REMARKS**

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### **OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 63<sup>rd</sup> GREATER HORN OF AFRICA CLIMATE OUTLOOK FORUM (GHACOF)**

**22<sup>nd</sup> FEBRUARY 2023**

**NAIROBI, KENYA**

- Your Excellency, **Rigathi Gachagua**, Deputy President of the Republic of Kenya;
- **Hon. Soipan Tuya**, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry;
- The **Director of the Kenya Meteorological Department**;
- My **Brothers and Sisters, Members of our IGAD family** in the region;
- **Distinguished Guests**;
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**,

It gives me great **pleasure to join you this morning at the official opening of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum.**

On behalf of the IGAD Secretariat, I would like to **thank the Government of Kenya for hosting this forum in Nairobi** and for the support extended to ICPAC over the years.



Today, we **celebrate the silver jubilee of the Climate Outlook Forum**. It has been 25 years since the very **first Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum was held right here in Nairobi in February 1998**, under the patronage of his Excellency and founder member of IGAD, the late President of the Republic of Kenya, Daniel T. Moi.

In recognition of our vision, **the World Meteorological Organization bestowed upon IGAD's climate center, regional status to cover Eastern Africa in 2017**.

Today, **ICPAC works closely with the national meteorological institutions of 11 Eastern Africa countries** to advance climate forecasting and climate services and build resilience in the region.

**Your Excellency, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The theme of this 63<sup>rd</sup> forum is "**Early Warning for Crisis Management**". Extreme climate events such as floods and droughts are natural events; however, they do not have to lead to humanitarian crises.

Early warning, early action and building community resilience can assist our region to avoid or minimize the worst effects of extreme weather.

Now that extreme climate events are expected to be more frequent and intense because of climate change, **the critical issue is to enhance the capacity of IGAD member states to provide actionable climate early warning**.

**Your Excellency, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Since their initiation in the 1996 Victoria Falls meeting, **Regional Climate Outlook Forums are platforms that bring together stakeholders at national, regional and international levels** to provide seasonal climate forecasts and advisories before the start of the major rainfall seasons.

**This information is important for decision makers to formulate the best policies and practices in response.** One of the first actions they took was to track and assess the impact of the 1997–1998 El Niño event.

Since then, climate outlook forums are widely recognized as key elements in the implementation of the Global Framework for Climate Services. Over the past decades, **ICPAC has advanced the methods used to produce regionally-owned seasonal forecasts, that combines information from various models.**

Despite this tremendous progress and achievement, **there is still room for improvement.** It is no longer enough to provide good climate forecasts or weather warnings. **Our states and societies need climate information that ensure the safety of their lives and the protection of their property.**

In this regard, I would like to request ICPAC and the participating national weather agencies to drive the shift from the traditional perspective of *what the weather will be* to a more proactive evaluation of *what the weather will do*, in order to strengthen the link between early warning and early action.

### **Excellency, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen**

I would like to **assure you that the IGAD Secretariat will continue to provide all the necessary support to ICPAC here in Nairobi and the IGAD Climate Adaptation Centre in Mogadishu** to discharge this shared mandate.

In conclusion, I wish you fruitful deliberations and want to express my sincere appreciation to USAID for supporting the establishment of this regional forum in 1996, and to the European Union and GIZ for their continued financial commitment to keep it alive.

**Together, we support the optimum application of climate services for sustainable development in our region.**

**Thank you very much.**