



Opening Remarks

Workneh Gebeyehu, IGAD Executive Secretary

2nd IGAD Ministerial Conference on Labour, Employment and Labour Migration

2nd March 2023

Addis Ababa, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

- Your Excellency, **Muferiat Kamil**, Minister of Labour and Skills Development of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and our gracious host;
- Your Excellency, **Hon. Abdi Said**, Minister for Labour, Formalization and Social Protection, Republic of Djibouti;
- Your Excellency, **Florence Bore Tapnyole**, Cabinet Secretary, for Labour & Social Protection, Republic of Kenya;
- Your Excellency, **Bhi Iman Eghe**, Minister for Labour and Social Affairs, Federal Republic of Somalia;
- Your Excellency, **James Hoth Mai**, Minister of Labour, Republic of South Sudan;
- Your Excellency, Hon. **Col. Engola Okello**, State Minister for Labour, Employment and Industrial Relations, Republic of Uganda;
- Mr. **Kamal Aldin Mohammed Ahmed**, Secretary-General National Training Council in the Ministry of Labour of the Republic of Sudan and Representing the IGAD Chair;
- Distinguished **representatives of our umbrella organization the African Union;**
- Your Excellency, **Sylvie Tabesse**, Ambassador of the European Union to Djibouti and accredited to IGAD;
- Mr. **Alexio Musindo**, ILO Director, Country Office for Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan, and Special Representative for AU and ECA;
- Distinguished **representatives of our Development Partners**

- Esteemed **Representatives of regional employment organizations, trade unions and the private sector;**
- Dear **IGAD Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my great pleasure and an honour to welcome you all warmly on behalf the IGAD Secretariat to the **2nd IGAD Ministerial Conference on Labour, Employment and Labour Migration** here in the historic city and diplomatic capital of our continent, Addis Ababa.

Since the dawn of history, **the success and survival of the human race has depended most on our mobility.** It is our ability to move away from unfavourable surroundings and our capacity to find opportunities and prosper in new environments that has contributed to the evolution and eminence of mankind.

Indeed, **the most prosperous nations and communities are founded on migration** and the resulting diversity and collaboration that it engenders. **Labour migration** certainly remains one of **the most visible and impactful catalysts of regional integration.**

Consider how **the success of multilateralism**, including the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), **relies squarely upon the free movement of people, capital, ideas and services within our continent and across the world.**

In this regard, I am pleased to note that **IGAD in collaboration with our technical partner the UN-ILO have recorded significant progress in realizing the ideals enshrined in the 2021 Djibouti Declaration on Labour, Employment and Labour Migration** on 5 major fronts namely;

- i. Preparation of **implementation and action plans for the 2021 Djibouti Declaration**
- ii. **Capacity building for IGAD Member States**, Social Partners and Labour attaches on labour migration governance;
- iii. Formulation of the **Draft IGAD Social Protection Strategy**,
- iv. Development of the **Labour Market Information System (LMIS)**
- v. **Updated labour migration statistics and studies on social protection, youth employment and women migrants** in the IGAD Region.

These initiatives are **playing a vital role in addressing the high levels of under-employment in our region**, which stands at 61.2% or 2 out of every 3 of our citizens.

At the same time, **our efforts here are critical to responding to the status of the Greater Horn of Africa as the 2nd most popular labour destination on the continent** with an annual rate of entry of 7.8%.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Looking forward, **ratifying key ILO International Labour Standards is one of the most important steps our region can take to promote the decent work agenda and create conducive working environment** for the youth for our region to reap the social and economic dividends of labour migration.

We therefore **appeal to Member States to work towards fulfilling the commitments and obligations of the various ILO International Labour Standards** to which we are signatories.

Furthermore, **for evidence-driven policymaking in labour governance it is essential that we finalise the development of the Regional Labour Market Information System (LMIS)** to monitor the labour market trends in our region. So far, **IGAD has developed the IGAD Regional Statistics Development Strategy** to guide the collection, collation and analysis of regional labour market data.

The other important aspect of the Declaration is **strengthening Social Protection for workers including labour migrants and workers in the informal economy** who are highly vulnerable to abuse.

In this regard, I would like to announce **IGAD will be supporting Member States to fully participate in the preparations and events of the proposed African Union led dialogue with the GCC on labour migration** in 2023.

It is my **recommendation that a Technical Team from the Secretariat and Member States joins the AU-led planning sessions** to ensure that as a region, we are fully prepared and represented to share our context-specific experiences and solutions at the GCC Dialogue.

More **importantly this IGAD Ministerial Committee on Labour, Employment and Labour migration should also participate in this important dialogue in the GCC** in order to translate the technical outcomes into policy-level decisions.

In this regard, **we are looking forward to the endorsement of the key policy decisions and directives that will be presented in the Ministerial Communique** which is the key outcome document of this Conference.

Excellencies, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen,

In conclusion, **allow me to extend IGAD's deep appreciation to the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia** for hosting the conference and Ministry of Labour and Skills for their magnificent role in coordinating this event with IGAD.

On behalf of IGAD, I also **thank the EU for their unwavering financial support** to the protocols on free movement and transhumance, **as well as the UN-ILO for their sustained technical support** for this initiative.

Finally, **special thanks to other IGAD partners including the World Bank, AfDB, the Governments of Sweden, Switzerland, Germany** for their generous financial support to promotion of good migration governance.

I thank you for your kind attention.