



OPENING REMARKS

WORKNEH GEBEYEHU, IGAD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

CONTRACTS SIGNING CEREMONY FOR THE SUPERVISION AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW IGAD HQ BUILDING, REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI

Sunday, 2nd April 2023

- Your Excellency **Mahmoud Ali Yossouf**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Djibouti and our eminent host;
- Your Excellency, **Rahma Salim El-Obeid**, Ambassador of the Republic of Sudan to Djibouti and representative of the IGAD Chair;
- Your Excellencies, **Ambassadors of IGAD Member States** present in Djibouti representing the Federal Democratic Republic of **Ethiopia**, the Republic of **Kenya** and the Federal Republic of **Somalia**;
- Your Excellency **Mr. Hu Bin**, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Djibouti;
- Distinguished representatives of **Saba Engineering PLC**, the construction supervisors and **China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC)** the official contractors of the new IGAD Headquarters;
- Fellow Members of the **IGAD Family**;
- **Ladies and Gentlemen:**

I am truly delighted to welcome you all here to witness this great occasion as we sign the **the contracts for the supervision and construction of the New IGAD HQ Building in the Republic of Djibouti** with **Saba Engineering PLC**, the construction supervisors and **China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC)** the official contractors of the new IGAD Headquarters.



Today marks yet another milestone in the history of IGAD. Over the past 37 years, **IGAD has grown into one of the most vibrant regional organizations in the world**, hosting over 400 staff members.

Now, **as we move closer to marking the Golden Jubilee of IGAD**, we can look back with a sense accomplishment on the momentous achievements our organization has realized. We should also look forward to this current exciting phase of institutional growth and development that shall **reflect the stature of our ambitions for the future**.

While over time our organization has overcome numerous obstacles, delivered many successes and been entrusted with a broader mandate, **we are still constrained by our institutional infrastructure, especially with regard to office space for our Secretariat**.

To rise to this challenge, we embarked on a mission 3 years ago in February 2020 towards realizing our long-held dream to construct a new headquarters building for our organization that would **bring IGAD under one roof**.

By pulling together our offices that are currently located in different parts of the Djibouti, the **new IGAD headquarters symbolises our own efforts and commitment towards integration internally** and will embody at institutional level, our highest ideal and aspiration of regional integration.

For the 270 million citizens that have entrusted IGAD with their destiny, the new headquarters will be **a reflection our diversity and shared regional identity and a symbol of our collective efforts** towards achieving peace, prosperity and integration.



At the global level, **our new headquarters is an investment in the universal ideals of multilateralism** through enhanced regional cooperation and the **promotion of the spirit of Pan-Africanism in the greater horn.**

This dream was inspired in no small part by our most gracious hosts, the Republic of Djibouti who had the strategic vision to donate the 1-hectare parcel of land that the new headquarters will sit on. This is in addition to sheltering IGAD for the last 37 years since its inception in 1986 and is truly an **unquestionable reflection of the endless benevolence of the people and government of Djibouti** under the leadership of the President of this Nation, H.E. Ismail Omar Guelleh.

It is said that **"a dream delayed, is not a dream denied"**. It was our single-minded intention in February 2020 to have made significant progress in this project in the intervening period.

However, our world and our region in particular was affected by **a series of unfortunate events that made it difficult to mobilize funds and placed financial constraints on our progress** including; the global pandemic, desert locust invasion, conflict both here and abroad and finally the ongoing and protracted drought.

In spite of this, we were **able to continue receiving support from the dependable friends of IGAD** that enabled us to keep moving forward.

With the easing of many of these situations, **I am encouraged that we are currently mobilizing additional resources including from private sector partners** as mandated recently in December last year by the 48th Meeting of the IGAD Council of Ministers.



In conclusion,

I would like to **appreciate all our Member States, staff and partners that have kept the vision the new IGAD Headquarters alive** and kept pushing the ball forward until this point here today.

I deeply appreciate the support of all our Member States without whom IGAD would not exist. Specifically, I would like to **thank the past and present leadership IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government** under the Chairmanship of the Republic of Sudan for their steadfast support and far-sighted steering of our organisation.

Additionally, we truly **appreciate the IGAD Council of Ministers and the IGAD Committee of Ambassadors** for their expertise in the policy, technical and administrative aspects of past, current and future activities of IGAD.

I also **take this opportunity to thank retired and active members of the Secretariat** who worked tirelessly alongside the Architectural team to translate our collective vision into actionable plans for this future headquarters complex. We applaud them for investing their imagination and inspiration to deliver a most original design.

Finally, I want to thank **Saba Engineering PLC**, the construction supervisors and the **People's Republic of China** through the **China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC)** the official contractors of the new IGAD Headquarters, for supporting our dream and taking up the challenge of translating it into a reality.

Thank You Very Much.