



## **OPENING STATEMENT**

### **WORKNEH GEBEYEHU, IGAD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

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#### **IGAD PSD Partners Meeting on the Regional Peace and Security**

**Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

- **Excellencies Ambassadors,**
- **Esteemed IGAD Partners**
- **Invited Dignitaries, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**
- **All Protocols Observed.**

I am **honored by your presence at this crucial IGAD Partners briefing on the peace and security situation** in our region.

I will begin by **re-emphasizing IGAD's ongoing and deep concern regarding the tragic crisis unfolding in the Republic of Sudan.**

IGAD is steadfastly committed to fostering peace in Sudan and the broader region. We are by now, well aware of the ongoing efforts by IGAD Member States, the African Union and the international community at large to address the situation in the Republic of Sudan and bring the warring parties to the negotiating table.

**The signing of the "Agreement on Short-Term Ceasefire and Humanitarian Arrangements in Sudan" was a significant step,** and we extend our appreciation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States of America for facilitating the Jeddah Talks.



Last week on Friday, **IGAD actively participated in the Peace and Security Council meeting of the African Union**, held at the level of Heads of State and Government on the Situation in Sudan, which among other important decisions, **emphasized that no sustainable military solution is feasible in this conflict** and only genuine dialogue and reconciliation would be beneficial to Sudan and the entire Horn of Africa region.

IGAD's core message to the meeting which was also adopted was on the **overriding importance of a single, inclusive and consolidated peace process for Sudan**, coordinated under the joint auspices of the African Union, IGAD, League of Arab States and the United Nations, along with like-minded partners. **We noted that a multiplicity and proliferation of mediation initiatives would not serve the interests of the collective will of the Sudanese people.**

**Our initiative through the 3-member High-Level Committee** led by H.E. the President of the Republic of South Sudan; and comprising of Excellencies the Presidents of the Republics of Kenya and Djibouti respectively, **has been recognized for its capacity to strengthen coordination and support the 6-point African Union Roadmap towards silencing the guns and the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of Sudan.**

**IGAD welcomes the 5-day extension to the short-term the ceasefire which was announced this morning** and urges all stakeholders in the Republic of Sudan to expand it to permanent status and further continue pursuing the peaceful resolution of this conflict through dialogue.

Turning to the other peace and security dynamics affecting our region, we acknowledge the persistent challenges that we continue to face. **Inter-state and intra-state conflicts continue to afflict us, compounded by the impact of conflicts in neighbouring regions and beyond** particularly Yemen and the Ukraine.

Furthermore, vulnerabilities such as the recent drought and instances of flooding have been exacerbated by **global warming and environmental degradation**, presenting new and more formidable challenges affecting our region and undermining peace and security.

Nevertheless, we have recorded a number of notable successes. Somalia witnessed a **peaceful transfer of political power** and additionally is **proceeding to hold elections in the Federal Member States under the principle of Universal Suffrage**.

**This is in spite of the continuing threat of *Al-Shabaab*** and I take this opportunity to condole with the families and friends of the **Peacekeepers from the Republic of Uganda that were recently attacked**. IGAD also appreciates the sacrifices and risks all troop-contributing countries are making to keep our region safe.

The Republics of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya have also conducted **peaceful elections** which have **further entrenched democracy in the region**. Moreover, thanks to the Pretoria Agreement, **the war in northern Ethiopia has ceased**.

Against this regional backdrop, IGAD has been **actively engaged in promoting peace and stability, encouraging cross-border cooperation, and fostering stronger regional integration.**

As part of our endeavours, **we have developed a 5-year Peace and Security strategy for the period 2021-2025**, building upon the lessons learned from the previous five-year strategy that concluded in 2020.

The strategy is **structured around the following 5 main program areas:**

1. Early warning and Response Mechanism
2. Preventive diplomacy and mediation support
3. Promotion of good governance, rule of law, and the protection of human rights,
4. Tackling transnational security threats like terrorism, violent extremism, and transnational organized crime,
5. Enhancing capabilities in post-conflict reconstruction and development.

Throughout these programs, **IGAD has ensured that gender mainstreaming and youth engagement are incorporated as crucial cross-cutting considerations.**

The purpose of today's briefing is to therefore **acquaint you with the new peace and security strategy and seek your input and support for its full implementation.**



**Peace and Security is a public good which we all share and collectively benefit from.** The sustainability of regional stability is a product of our inter-dependence and specifically relies on the backing of our Member States and citizens, as well as the unwavering commitment of all of you as our strategic partners.

Therefore, I **entreat each and every one of you to renew your support for our organization,** as we tirelessly strive to uphold peace and security in our region.

**Thank you.**