



OPENING STATEMENT

WORKNEH GEBEYEHU, IGAD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

IGAD COP28 High-Level Presidential Event on Climate, Peace and Security in the Horn of Africa Monday, 4th December 2023

- Your Excellency **Ismail Omar Guelleh**, President of the Republic of Djibouti and Chairperson of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government;
- Our guest of Honour and Gracious Host Excellency **Sheikh Shakhbout Nayhan al-Nayhan**, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, United Arab Emirates.
- Your Excellency **Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud**, President of the Federal Republic of Somalia;
- Your Excellency **Salva Kiir**, President of the Republic of South Sudan;
- Hon. **Eamon Ryan**, Ireland Minister for Environment
- Hon. **Anne Tvneirem**, Norway Minister for International Development
- Dr. **Victoria Kwakwa**, World Bank Vice President for East and Southern Africa
- Dr. **Akiwumi Adessina**, President of the African Development Bank;
- **Hannah Tetteh**, UN Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa;
- Dr. **Anette Weber**, EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa
- Amb. **Smiljana Knez**, Amb-at-Large on Climate Security of the Republic of Slovenia
- Amb. **Sarah Montgomery**, UK Special Envoy for the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa
- **Distinguished Guests;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen;**



Good afternoon,

It is a profound honour for me, as the Executive Secretary of IGAD, to extend a special welcome you all and extend warm and heartfelt greetings to each of us gathered here for this pivotal High-Level Presidential Panel on Climate, Peace, and Security in the Horn of Africa, within the framework of COP28 in the vibrant city of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates.

At the outset, allow me to express my gratitude for the impactful decisions made early in this conference, particularly the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund, a beacon of hope for the world's most vulnerable countries including in the IGAD region grappling with the devastating impacts of climate disasters. This commitment to solidarity sets the stage for the crucial discussions we embark upon today.

At the same time, allow me to also voice our concern as the Countries of the Greater Horn of Africa, that this significant commitment to address the immediate impacts of climate change should not be taken as a substitute for existing pledges and obligations to tackle the indirect effects of climate change particularly climate-related conflict and development programming.

It is vital that proportional resources are earmarked and directed towards the restoration and maintenance of peace and security if the intended benefits of the loss and damage fund are to fully accrue to our communities that are most vulnerable to climate change and conflict, particularly in the borderlands.

Your Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

In our region, the impact of climate change is a day-to-day reality that affects every aspect of our lives. Climate change is not just an ecological challenge—it is a catalyst for conflict, a disruptor of peace, and a threat to security.



It amplifies existing vulnerabilities, deepens social and economic disparities, and fosters conditions that are ripe for unrest. Today, we convene not just to acknowledge these challenges but to chart a course of action that aligns with our shared commitment to fostering resilience, peace, and security.

Our region has witnessed the intricate dance between climate change and conflict, where the impact of one resonates through the other. Indeed, the latest report by the IGAD Conflict Early Warning Mechanism (CEWARN) concluded that the drier our region gets, the more we fight.

It is therefore our duty to untangle these complexities, address the root causes, and forge a sustainable path forward. I am encouraged that our collective presence in this High-Level Event underscores the gravity of the challenges we face in the Horn of Africa.

I look forward to the depths that this esteemed panel will explore into the heart of the matter, considering the correlation between climate, peace, and security. Together, we aim not only to highlight the challenges but to propose viable solutions and recommendations that will guide our collective journey toward a more resilient and secure Horn of Africa.

Your Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

On our part, the IGAD Climate Security Coordination Mechanism, which a visionary initiative endorsed by the IGAD Heads of State and Government at the 14th Ordinary Summit in June this year, serves as a testament to our shared commitment.



This unique framework, linking Member States, IGAD, the African Union, and the United Nations, especially the Office of the Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, is an unprecedented collaboration that underscores our dedication to addressing urgent climate security challenges.

This framework is our acknowledgment that addressing climate security challenges requires multi-faceted solutions and a coordinated multi-lateral approach for policymakers, policy practitioners and most importantly for our policy consumers. We need to balance both the immediate and long-term perspectives for change, while contributing positively to peace and social cohesion.

Your Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

While we have a robust IGAD Climate Security Coordination Mechanism in place, collective action is imperative for our efforts to truly make an impact. Urgent support, pooling of expertise, and harnessing traditional mechanisms are critical steps toward forging a stronger, more resilient path forward.

In conclusion, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each one of you for your unwavering commitment to this critical cause. Let our deliberations here today serve as a catalyst for transformative action, demonstrating to the world our collective determination to boost the security of our people, safeguard the well-being of our planet and bring forth prosperity for all.

It is now my distinct privilege to invite Your Excellency [insert name] to moderate the presidential panel discussion

Thank you.