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**Remarks by H.E Dr Workneh Gebeyehu, IGAD Executive Secretary at
Mediation Planning Retreat on Sudan, 25th July 2024, Djibouti, Republic of
Djibouti**

1. I am honoured to address you at this significant retreat of multilateral organizations and stakeholders dedicated to mediating the Sudan conflict. Your presence here today is a clear testimony of the shared commitment towards achieving a peaceful resolution of the armed conflict in Sudan, sixteen months since it broke out in April 2023.
2. The conflict in Sudan has undeniably shaken our region, shattered the lives of millions, and exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa and beyond. It poses a severe challenge to regional peace and security. However, it also underscores the urgent need for our collective efforts and the unparalleled strength of multilateral collaboration.
3. IGAD applauds the Arab League of States' initiative to organize the multistakeholder planning retreat to enhance the coordination of mediation initiatives regarding the ongoing catastrophe.
4. This remarkable effort demonstrates the strength of collective planning, strategic thinking, and collaborative problem-solving. We believe in the transformative impact of such unity and are optimistic about the positive outcomes for Sudan.
5. We deeply appreciate H.E. President Ismail Omar Guelleh's pivotal role as Chairperson of IGAD. His wise leadership and steadfast guidance have been instrumental in our ongoing efforts to resolve the Sudan conflict. Additionally, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Republic of Djibouti, the headquarters of IGAD, for graciously hosting the Sudan mediation planning retreat.
6. Similarly, I would like to express my profound gratitude to all IGAD Heads of State and Government. Their unwavering support for the mediation efforts,

including hosting Summits and engaging in diplomatic initiatives, has been crucial in addressing the conflict in Sudan.

7. Excellency Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, in your capacity as Chairperson of the IGAD Council of Ministers, your relentless pursuit of peace and decisive leadership in supporting IGAD's mediation efforts in the Sudan conflict has been nothing short of remarkable. Your steadfast dedication to fostering regional stability has been a cornerstone for the milestones we have registered so far. We extend our deepest gratitude for your invaluable support and vision.
8. Over the past months, IGAD and our continental and international partners have actively engaged in various mediation efforts. We have seen moments of hope and instances of setbacks, but our resolve has remained unshaken and we are determined to continue until our brothers and sisters in Sudan achieve lasting peace.
9. Our robust partnership with the African Union and our collaboration with the United Nations, the European Union, the USA, Saudi Arabia, and other Sudanese allies have proven invaluable. This unified approach underscores that collective action is essential for achieving lasting peace.
10. Excellences and distinguished participants, we acknowledge the complex nature of the Sudan conflict. It transcends political dimensions, encompassing a humanitarian crisis, an economic struggle, and social upheaval. Sustainably addressing these layers of complexity calls for adopting a comprehensive strategy that extends beyond immediate ceasefires and focuses on effective security and political transition, reconciliation and socio-economic transformation.
11. Today, we are assembled as a diverse group of stakeholders, each bringing a unique perspective and vital contribution. Through this rich tapestry of voices, we can create innovative solutions and build a framework that genuinely reflects the aspirations of the Sudanese people.
12. Excellencies and distinguished participants, IGAD has diligently provided its strategic platforms for numerous mediation initiatives to resolve the Sudan conflict. Excluding a regional body like IGAD in any of these mediation efforts doesn't help.

13. We are resolute in our conviction that sidelining a regional organization like IGAD, which has been instrumental in Sudan's peace initiatives both before and following the escalation of the conflict in April 2023, is counterproductive to the best interests of achieving lasting peace in Sudan.
14. IGAD deeply values the strategic partnerships in this crucial endeavour and looks forward to continued collaboration to achieve our shared objectives.
15. As we embark on this retreat, let us seize the strategic opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to our mission, fortify our alliances, and, most importantly, restore hope and peace to our brothers and sisters from Sudan.
16. We firmly believe that the insights and solutions generated from this mediation retreat, which has a rich calibre of participants, will be critical in addressing the barriers faced over the past sixteen months, empowering us to drive our Sudan peace initiatives to success.