



PEACE, PROSPERITY AND
REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Remarks by H.E Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, IGAD Executive Secretary, on the Occasion of International Youth Day, 2024

Today, as we celebrate International Youth Day, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) acknowledges the invaluable contributions of young people in the Horn of Africa.

This year's theme, "From Clicks to Progress: Youth Digital Pathways for Sustainable Development," aligns with our ongoing commitment to creating an environment where youth can flourish, innovate, and lead.

With more than 60 per cent of our population comprising young people, their energy, creativity, and resilience are pivotal as we address challenges in our region and transform them into opportunities. They are not only the leaders of tomorrow but also the change-makers of today. We must harness their potential to promote sustainable development, peace, and security in our member states.

Throughout history, young people have spearheaded social movements advocating for human rights, climate action, and democratic governance. IGAD recognises the importance of providing them with the right tools, education, and platforms to express their ideas and visions for a better future. We remain resolute in our commitment to fostering meaningful youth engagement in decision-making processes, ensuring that their voices contribute to shaping our collective future. The development of the IGAD Regional Youth Policy Framework and the appointment of the IGAD Youth Envoy exemplify our dedication to empowering youth and integrating their perspectives into our regional agenda.

Today, we urge governments, civil society organisations, and the private sector to invest in programmes that empower youth through education, entrepreneurship, and skill development. We must work together to create job opportunities in industries such as technology, innovation, agriculture, and renewable energy, enabling young people to innovate and contribute to sustainable economic growth.

We must address the various challenges that young people face, such as unemployment, political instability, climate change, irregular migration, displacement, and human trafficking. By fostering an inclusive culture and encouraging active participation, we can effectively tackle these issues and build strong communities that honour the aspirations of our youth.

As we celebrate International Youth Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to uplifting our youth and creating an enabling environment for them to thrive and lead. Our youth are the heartbeat of our region; let us ensure that their pulse drives us towards a brighter future.

Together, we can create a more inclusive, peaceful, and prosperous Horn of Africa.
