



OPENING STATEMENT
H.E. WORKNEH GEBEYEHU (PhD)
IGAD Executive Secretary

**Joint UN-IGAD High-Level Consultations on Peace and Security
Developments in the Horn of Africa.**

UNECA HQ, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Friday, 13th September 2024 | 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

Salutations

-
- Your Excellency **Hannah Tetteh**, UN Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa
 - Esteemed partners and IGAD colleagues,

Introduction

-
1. As we gather today for these Joint UN-IGAD High-Level Consultations on Peace and Security Developments in the Horn of Africa, I begin by expressing my profound appreciation for the enduring partnership between the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the United Nations.
 2. The relationship between our organisations rooted in our shared pursuit of peace and our collaboration has been pivotal in addressing the multifaceted challenges of peace and security in our region.

Acknowledging the UN Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa

-
3. I am delighted to extend a special acknowledgement to my dear sister Hannah Tetteh, the UN Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa whose tour of duty in our region is sadly coming to an end.
 4. During her very short time with us, IGAD was a big beneficiary of her tireless efforts and unwavering commitment, which significantly built on the foundations of our 2015 joint framework for cooperation to promote inclusive regional engagement for effective conflict prevention.



5. Indeed, the efforts that the Special Envoy and her predecessors have strengthened the partnership between IGAD and the UN, most recently in March of this year when we met to agree on priorities and joint initiatives for 2024-2025.
6. This regular meeting of minds is embedded in the principles of multilateralism and enabled us to jointly navigate the complex environment in the Horn of Africa to follow our shared objectives in promoting peace and stability. Join me as we wish her every success in her next assignment.

On the vital importance of Multilateralist Efforts in Peace & Security

7. I want to reiterate the position that "no nation can achieve peace alone." We need to come together and pool our efforts and resources to address the urgent issues affecting our region.
8. In this regard, IGAD also recognizes the invaluable contributions of our partners, including the African Union, the European Union, regional economic communities, and civil society peace partners, including women and our youth.
9. The coordination of our efforts towards a joint approach for the restoration and maintenance of peace is essential especially in the case of Sudan.
10. Their engagement is essential in fostering both cross-border and internal dialogue as well as a coordinated, comprehensive and inclusive approach to peacebuilding.

Situation in the Horn of Africa

11. The Horn of Africa is currently grappling with significant political and security challenges, particularly in Sudan, Somalia, South Sudan, and Ethiopia. The protracted conflict in Sudan risks becoming **"the forgotten war"**.
12. It has created the world's largest and fastest-growing humanitarian crisis with over 2.1 million new refugees and 7.9 million internally displaced people. Estimates show that as many as 20,000 of our regional citizens are forced to flee their homes daily.



13. Sudan is also on the brink of a catastrophic hunger crisis. Currently, more than half the population (25.6 million people) are facing crisis-level hunger, and three-quarters of a million are at-risk of famine, thus compounding the humanitarian crises across the region.
14. IGAD remains at the forefront of the march towards peace in the Sudan and has ceaselessly advocated for the unification and coordination of the many and most well-meaning diplomatic initiatives by the different partners. We all want peace to return to the people of the Sudan, so I once again call upon us to work together for our brothers and sisters who are suffering.
15. Similarly, the situation in South Sudan remains precarious, especially in the context of the upcoming elections and ongoing violence and food insecurity affecting millions.
16. In Somalia, the political and post-ATMIS security transition poses significant challenges including threats to the vital maritime artery in the Red Sea.
17. The post ATMIS should most certainly focus on supporting stabilization, the fight against Al-Shabab and violent extremism, peace and state building as well as inclusive socio-political reconciliation and economic recovery that permits the participation of youth and women.
18. Ethiopia also grapples with the aftermath of an internal conflict that strained its social fabric. I take this opportunity to once again to deeply appreciate the unforgettable role Hannah Tete played in the negotiations towards peace during the talks in Pretoria.
19. The humanitarian implications of these conflicts are dire, with over 55.45 million people across our Member States in need of urgent food assistance. This situation is further aggravated by the post-covid impact on our states and societies, as well as climate-related disasters.



20. In recent times, extreme weather phenomena, including droughts and floods, have intensified resource competition, leading to increased tensions among communities.
21. Moreover, the ripple effect of extra-regional conflicts, such as those in Yemen, the Israel-Gaza situation, and the ongoing war in Ukraine, has served to further complicate our security landscape. These conflicts are also a threat to our regional stability and hinder our collective efforts to achieve sustainable development.

Conclusion and Call to Action

22. As we deliberate today on the proposals for joint IGAD-UN Activities for the period 2024-2025, I urge all stakeholders to **keep our region's major conflicts firmly within the international community's sightlines so that they are unforgotten.**

There is therefore an undeniable need for coordinated multilateral actions and solutions amongst ourselves to address these challenges effectively.

23. In closing, let us reaffirm our commitment to our Joint Framework for Cooperation. a collaborative approach, ensuring that our collective efforts yield tangible results for peace and security in the Horn of Africa. Together, we can pave the way for a more stable and prosperous future for our people.

Thank you all very much.