

PEACE, PROSPERITY AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

COMMUNIQUÉ SECOND IGAD MINISTERIAL MEETING ON ENHANCING PREPAREDNESS FOR PANDEMIC RESPONSE USING A ONE HEALTH APPROACH

29th August 2025 Kampala, Republic of Uganda

We, the Ministers of Health on behalf of the relevant line ministries in the One Health domain of the Member States of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, convened under the leadership of His Excellency Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary of IGAD and Chairman of the Coordination and Collaboration Platform of Regional Economic Communities of the African Union, assembled in Kampala, Republic of Uganda, on the 29th day of August in the year 2025, for the solemn purpose of officially inaugurating the Preparedness for Pandemic Response (PREPARE) Project and deliberating upon comprehensive strategies to enhance pandemic preparedness and response capabilities through the implementation of a unified One Health approach across the IGAD region.

Present at this distinguished assembly were: Her Excellency Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng Ocero, Minister of Health of the Republic of Uganda; Her Excellency Sarah Cleto Hassan Rial, Minister of Health, Republic of South Sudan; Her Excellency Dr. Mariam Mohamed Hussein, State Minister of Health and Human Services, representing the Minister of Health and Human Services of the Federal Republic of Somalia; Ms. Mary Muthoni Muriuki, CBS, Principal Secretary, State Department of Public Health and Professional Standards, representing the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Health, Republic of Kenya; Mr. Mohamed Ali Mohamed, Secretary General, Ministry of Health, representing the Minister for Health, Republic of Djibouti;



Dr. Elfaddil Mohammed Mahmoud Mohammed, Director-General of Health Emergencies and Epidemics Control representing the Minister for Health, Republic of the Sudan; **Prof. Sileshi Garoma Abeya**, Advisor to the State Minister, Ministry of Health of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, **Dr. Charles Businge**, Africa Regional Director, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, **Dr. Robert Kwesiga**, Secretary General of the Uganda Red Cross, **Dr. Kasonde Mwinga**, WHO Country Representative, Republic of Uganda as well as civil society organisations in Uganda's public health sector; senior officials of the IGAD member states and Secretariat.

PREAMBLE:

RECALLING WITH APPRECIATION the substantive recommendations emanating from successive IGAD ministerial meetings convened to address transboundary public health threats, notably the IGAD Heads of State and Government (HSOG) Extraordinary Summit declaration of March 30th 2020, on the regional response strategy to COVID-19, which underscored the significance of cross-border health initiatives in the region's pandemic preparedness and response, the 9th IGAD Ministerial Meeting on Surveillance and Outbreaks conducted in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya, in July 2016; the 10th Ministerial Meeting on Refugee and Cross-Border Health held in Addis Ababa, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, in March 2018; the 12th Ministerial Meeting addressing the regional response to the COVID-19 pandemic convened via videoconference in April 2020; and the 13th IGAD Health Ministerial Committee Meeting on refugee and cross-border health initiatives;

ACKNOWLEDGING WITH DEEP CONCERN that pandemics have imposed unprecedented socio-economic burdens upon the African continent, with the COVID-19 pandemic alone precipitating an estimated gross domestic product contraction of 3.4 percent in 2020 and disrupting more than 70 percent of essential health services across Sub-Saharan Africa, while our IGAD region has experienced disproportionate adverse impacts attributable to pre-existing structural vulnerabilities and extensive patterns of cross-border population mobility;

NOTING WITH PROFOUND APPRECIATION the historic declaration adopted by the IGAD Heads of State and Government Summit on the 30th day of March 2020, establishing a comprehensive regional response strategy to the COVID-19 pandemic, which emphasized the paramount importance of cross-border health initiatives in strengthening pandemic preparedness and response mechanisms throughout our region;



GUIDED BY THE PRINCIPLES of the One Health approach as comprehensively defined by the One Health High Level Expert Panel (OHHLEP) and formally endorsed by the Quadripartite Alliance comprising the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which advances an integrated and unifying approach designed to achieve sustainable balance and optimization of human, animal, and ecosystem health;

EXPRESSING GRAVE CONCERN regarding the persistent and escalating threat posed by infectious disease outbreaks, including the recent Mpox outbreak first confirmed within the IGAD region on the 24th day of July 2024 in Kasese District, Republic of Uganda, which subsequently expanded to the Republic of Kenya by July 2024, and South Sudan in February 2025, thereby demonstrating the elevated risk of cross-border disease transmission within our interconnected regional framework;

RECOGNIZING THE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE indicating that approximately 75 percent of emerging and reemerging infectious diseases in humans are zoonotic in nature, and that our IGAD region's extensive cross-border movement of populations, livestock, wildlife and commercial goods creates both significant challenges and unprecedented opportunities for comprehensive disease prevention and control initiatives;

ACKNOWLEDGING WITH GRATITUDE the pivotal role undertaken by the Pandemic Fund in advancing global health security objectives, with the African continent receiving approximately 40 percent of initial funding allocations specifically designated to strengthen pandemic preparedness capacities across the region;

EXPRESSING SINCERE APPRECIATION of the exemplary leadership demonstrated by the IGAD Secretariat, the Member States, Pandemic Fund, the World Health Organization, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in mobilising resources.



SOLEMN DECLARATIONS AND COMMITMENTS:

WE HEREBY COLLECTIVELY RESOLVE AND SOLEMNLY PLEDGE OUR GOVERNMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS TO THE FOLLOWING STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES:

STRENGTHENING CROSS-BORDER SURVEILLANCE AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

Establish and reinforce comprehensive cross-border surveillance and monitoring mechanisms and fully operational Early Warning Systems within border regions, encompassing the standardized diagnostic tools and training protocols while enhancing community-based surveillance infrastructure.

The development of unified digital One Health surveillance data repository platforms integrated with advanced emergency response capabilities towards a seamless coordination among One Health personnel across Member States.

The deployment of specialized cross-border One Health surveillance and response teams with sustained support for regular coordination, consultation, and collaborative initiatives among Member States.

The design and validation of gender-sensitive pandemic preparedness and response plans

Foster Inter-REC collaboration and coordination for scaled-up regional and continental pandemic preparedness.

ENHANCING LABORATORY CAPACITY

The strengthening of laboratory capacities within cross-border regions to facilitate the rapid confirmation and characterization of diseases possessing epidemic potential, including comprehensive assessments and prioritized support for upgrading diagnostic capabilities and interoperable information management systems.

The enhancement of laboratory networking through the establishment of robust cross-border laboratory networks equipped with state-of-the-art interoperable information management systems.



The development and implementation of a comprehensive regional biosafety and biosecurity strategy accompanied by detailed implementation guidelines and sustained support for Member State adaptation and adoption processes.

BUILDING WORKFORCE AND COMMUNITY SYSTEM CAPACITIES

Build and strengthen regional cross-border workforce capacity to effectively prepare for and respond to One Health emergencies while ensuring meaningful engagement with local communities and vulnerable populations.

Conduct comprehensive regional assessments examining multisectoral and community stakeholders, existing systems infrastructure, and current workforce capacities across the IGAD region.

Development harmonized One Health curricula, evidence-based capacity-building approaches, and context-adapted, gender-sensitive implementation guidelines tailored to regional specificities.

Systematic rollout of context-specific cross-border community engagement strategies, establish of minimum operational requirements, and develop standard operating procedures and protocols for building community engagement capacities in emergency response.

PROMOTING MULTISECTORAL COORDINATION AND EVIDENCE-BASED ADVOCACY

Allow for the flexibility of this fund to address national pandemic preparedness initiatives and efforts.

Establish and operationalize a regional One-Health coordination platform specifically designed for pandemic preparedness and response activities, ensuring comprehensive stakeholder participation and sustained engagement.

Develop evidence-based advocacy mechanisms promoting inclusive and sustainable epidemic and pandemic preparedness initiatives across all sectors and governance levels.

Create a Project Steering Committee tasked with providing expert guidance for policy development initiatives and coordinated resource mobilization efforts throughout the region.



MINISTERIAL-LEVEL COMMITMENTS AND UNDERTAKINGS:

WE THE MINISTERS SOLEMNLY COMMIT OURSELVES AND OUR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS TO:

UPHOLD AND STRENGTHEN the political will necessary to reinforce national One Health platforms with particular emphasis on enhancing cross-border cooperation mechanisms for comprehensive pandemic preparedness initiatives.

PROMOTE THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION and harmonization of cross-border pandemic preparedness coordination activities through the establishment of permanent coordination mechanisms and standardized operational procedures.

ENHANCE REAL-TIME DATA SHARING capabilities and ensuring interoperability between Member States while guaranteeing regular compilation and systematic dissemination of surveillance data across national boundaries.

ADVOCATE relevant governmental authorities for the allocation and protection of dedicated financial resources for multiple emergency scenarios and comprehensive Pandemic Preparedness and Response activities.

ENHANCE COLLABORATION with international, multilateral, bilateral organizations and institutions and private sector to address the challenges posed by recurrent and overlapping pandemic threats within our region through the systematic application of One Health methodologies.

MOBILIZE DOMESTIC RESOURCES and strategic investments to enhance the availability and accessibility of high-quality, equitable healthcare services specifically targeting cross-border and mobile populations.

DEVELOP ROBUST MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORKS for the systematic implementation of this Communiqué, incorporating periodic progress assessments and accountability mechanisms to ensure effective implementation and measurable outcomes.





IN CONCLUSION:

CALL UPON all stakeholders, including our valued development partners, civil society organizations, academic institutions, private sector and local communities, to provide sustained support for the comprehensive implementation of this Communiqué in service of the health security of our region and the African continent.

EXPRESS OUR PROFOUND GRATITUDE to the Government and People of the Republic of Uganda for their gracious hospitality and exemplary arrangements in hosting this historic Ministerial Meeting.

PLEDGE to remain actively and constructively engaged on these critical matters and to reconvene as circumstances require to assess implementation progress and address emerging challenges within our evolving regional health security landscape.

DONE at Kampala on this 29th day of August 2025, Republic of Uganda in **English** and **French** languages, all texts being equally authentic.

MOHAMED ALI MOHAMED

Secretary General, Ministry of Health, **Republic of Djibouti.**

PROF. SILESHI GAROMA ABEYA

Advisor to the State Minister, Ministry of Health Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

29/08/2025

MARY MUTHONI MURIUKI, CBS

Principal Secretary, State Department of Public Health and Professional Standards,

Ministry of Health,

Republic of Kenya.

29/8/2025

DR. MARIAN MOHAMED HUSSEIN

State Minister of Health and Human Services, **Federal Republic of Somalia.**

SARAH CLETO HASSAN RIAL

08/29/2025

Minister of Health,

Republic of South Sudan.

DR. ELFADDIL MOHAMMED MAHMOUD MOHAMMED

Director-General of Health Emergencies and Epidemics Control

Hanghith

Federal Ministry of Health,

Republic of the Sudan.

DR. JANE RUTH ACENG OCERO

Minister of Health,

Republic of Uganda.