



EVENT SPEECH

H.E. Workneh Gebeyehu, IGAD Executive Secretary

Handover Ceremony of Specialized Motor Vehicles to the Djibouti Postal Service

20th November 2025 | Djibouti

- Your Excellency, **Radwan Abdillahi Bahdon**, the Honourable Minister of Communication of the Republic of Djibouti IGAD Chair and our most generous host;
- Mr. **Bahnann Ali Maidal**, Director General of the Postal Services of Djibouti;
- Distinguished and diligent **Government Officials** of the Republic of Djibouti;
- Representatives of the **African Development Bank Group**;
- Our **Honoured Guests** and Esteemed **IGAD Colleagues**;

Good morning.

1. In this region there is a long-held truth that *a road is made by walking it together*. **This morning, we do more than walk, we drive. We accelerate. We arrive.** We deliver not just vehicles, but the **velocity to a vision** that has waited too long to become reality.
2. **Five vehicles.** Simple enough for any one of us to count on one hand. Yet what they carry cannot be measured in cargo capacity or fuel efficiency. **They carry a connection to the disconnected. They carry Opportunity to the overlooked. They carry the weight of a promise we are finally keeping,** that no village, no entrepreneur, no citizen in the Horn of Africa will be an isolated in the digital age.



Honourable minister, dear friends,

3. I will not sugar-coat our situation. While the world races ahead building digital superhighways and e-commerce markets, **our intra-regional trade limping behind at 6%. Six.** That is number that should haunt us as it haunts any parent whose child brings such a low academic result from school.
4. We are at 6% not because we lack resources or resilience, indeed we have both in abundance. But because **we have allowed invisible borders to persist long after colonial maps have yellowed and crumbled.** Long after technology has digitally erased the inherited borders that divide us as a people of one united region.
5. Poor roads. Tangled regulations. Poor connectivity. **These are the new checkpoints that stop our farmers from reaching markets, our young innovators from scaling ideas, our businesses from thinking beyond the horizon.**
6. But here is what keeps me awake at night, and what brought me to Djibouti this morning: we know exactly what needs fixing. The diagnosis is clear. The prescription is written. What remains is the will to fulfil it, and the wheels to deliver it. That, ladies and gentlemen is what today represents and why we stand connected here this morning.



Distinguished guests,

7. These vehicles, the utility vans seating 16 each, this mini-cargo van that can carry 10 and those four-wheel drive electric vehicles humming quietly with tomorrow's energy, **are the wheels of progress that will spin to turn the page onto a new chapter** on integrated regional communication and connection.
8. They have been made possible by an **8-million-dollar commitment from the African Development Bank** through our Horn of Africa Digital Market Integration Project (HDMI), they are **practical tools for an ambitious transformation**.
9. **Connectivity is one of the simplest and most powerful symbols of regional integration**. We aspire to work together as a region, and to do so effectively, we must ensure that everyone is brought on board. **Our shared destiny depends on our ability to stay connected and to embrace emerging technologies, including AI**.
10. **Djibouti is already at the frontline of this transformation and possesses unique comparative advantages**. This moment presents an opportunity for the country to champion practical and coordinated solutions that promote inclusion and improve service efficiency.
11. At IGAD, **we remain fully committed to supporting our Member States in strengthening the essential systems** that serve people and transform livelihoods.

Thank you.