



OPENING STATEMENT

H.E. Workneh Gebeyehu, IGAD Executive Secretary

Delivered by H.E. Mohamed Abdi Ware, IGAD Deputy Executive Secretary

IGAD Ministerial Meeting on “Unlocking Pastoral Livelihoods and Livestock Development through Transboundary Cooperation”

21st November 2025, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

- **Dr. Efa Muleta**, State Minister, in the Ministry of Agriculture, representing H.E. **Addisu Arega**, Minister of Agriculture of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, our most esteemed and generous host,
 - Your Excellency **Mohamed Ahmed Awaleh**, Minister for Agriculture, Water, Livestock & Fisheries of the Republic of Djibouti, representing His **Excellency Ismail Omar Guelleh**, the IGAD Chair,
 - Excellencies, **Ministers** responsible for Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and related sectors **from IGAD Member States**,
 - Your Excellency, **Dr. Denisa Elena Ionete**, Ambassador of the European Union to Djibouti and IGAD,
 - **Dr. Baba Soumare**, Deputy Director-General, World Organization for Animal Health,
 - **Mr. Khumbula Ndaba**, ILO Director for Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan and Special Representative to the AU and UNECA,
 - Eminent **delegates from IGAD Member State** Governments
 - Esteemed **Development Partners, Technical Agencies, Civil Society**, and **Private Sector** Representatives,
 - Distinguished **Guests, Ladies** and **Gentlemen**,
1. Let me first take a moment to express our profound appreciation to the Government and People of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.



2. Ethiopia has long been a custodian of regional cooperation, and its leadership in livestock development, pastoral resilience, and continental dialogue is felt not only here in Addis Ababa, but across the IGAD region. Hosting us today is yet another expression of Ethiopia's unwavering commitment to a region that stands together, works together, and prospers together.

Excellencies,

3. It is equally fitting that we gather under the chairmanship of the Republic of Djibouti, a Member State whose leadership within IGAD continues to set a high bar for regional diplomacy, cross-border cooperation, and visionary integration.
4. Through H.E. President **Ismail Omar Guelleh**, the voice of Djibouti's commitment to peace, mobility, and economic connectivity echoes powerfully, both within Africa and beyond.
5. Across our region, from the savannahs of Karamoja to the plains of Somali Region, the shores of the Red Sea and the highlands of Ethiopia and Kenya, the vast grazing belts of Sudan, the pastoral heartlands of South Sudan, and the resilient rangelands stretching across Eritrea, pastoralists rise each morning in service to a system as enduring as the landscape itself.
6. Their herds, collectively exceeding over half a billion animals (**505 million**), form Africa's largest livestock population. They sustain **over 250 million people**, representing livelihoods, identity, social cohesion, and dignity. In several of our Member States, livestock contributes up to **60% of agricultural GDP** and anchors exports, food systems, and rural employment.
7. This heritage, however, faces formidable pressures. The **2020–2022 drought claimed 13.2 million animals** across our region. Pasturelands that cover **60–70%** of our regional landmass continue to degrade, while **feed scarcity alone**



accounts for 60% of livestock productivity losses. Transboundary Animal Diseases (TADs) persist, border barriers limit trade, and our pastoralists continue to face hurdles that undermine their potential.

Your Excellencies,

8. If pastoralism teaches us anything, it teaches us adaptability. The seasonal mobility that defines **transhumance** is not a dusty relic of the past, it is our region's most sophisticated, nature-based response to climate variability.
9. The **IGAD Protocol on Transhumance** preserves this system by ensuring that mobility across borders is **safe, orderly, predictable, and dignified**, supported by harmonised standards, transhumance certificates, and coordinated surveillance systems.
10. Today's agenda is part of a wider dialogue on realizing the full adoption of the IGAD Transhumance Protocol, a shared regional aspiration that is long overdue.
11. Because time waits for no man, IGAD nevertheless continues to work and deliver on behalf of our Member States and with their guidance, has identified four **(4) pillars of collective action** that are essential unlocking the unlimited potential of our pastoral systems:

I. Rangeland Governance and Feed Security

85% of animal feed in our region comes from rangelands, yet these ecosystems are under stress. Scaling Participatory Rangeland Management (PRM), promoting certified forage seed systems, investing in feed reserves, and enabling private-sector-led feed production is absolutely essential.



II. One Health and Disease Control

If we are to achieve eradication of **PPR** (Sheep and goat plague) by 2030, we must reinforce national veterinary services, harmonise surveillance, strengthen laboratories, and expand vaccination campaigns. A coordinated One Health approach protects livelihoods and supports safe trade.

III. Modernising Livestock Trade

Digital traceability systems, harmonised Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards (SPS), improved quarantine infrastructure, and joint market information systems will position our producers to compete with countries on other parts of our continent which export more despite having far smaller herds.

IV. Gender and Youth Inclusion

Taking into consideration that that women uphold dairy systems and manage small ruminants on one hand, and our youth drive innovation through digital livestock tools and value-addition ventures on the other, empowering these valued members of our society is not simply a social priority, it is an economic catalyst.

Excellencies,

12. As the world prepares to observe the **International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) in 2026**, the IGAD region has a responsibility, as well as a unique opportunity to lead from the front. No region understands pastoralism more deeply than we do, and no region has more to gain from its transformation.
13. To the European Union, our principal partner supporting IGAD in the journey toward the Transhumance Protocol, the progress we celebrate today is rooted in your continued trust in our shared vision. IGAD also appreciates the technical and financial support of partners including the African Development Bank, the World Bank, the French Development Agency, Sweden, Switzerland, France, Germany, ILO, FAO, AU-



IBAR, ILRI, GIZ, the World Organization for Animal Health and many others, your support has been instrumental.

14. To you, the Honourable Ministers from our IGAD Member States, your stewardship of this sector is indispensable. The decisions you take today will determine whether pastoralism remains vulnerable to shocks, or becomes a driver of stability, growth, and regional prosperity.
15. In conclusion, pastoralism is not marginal and it is not temporary. It is one of the oldest and most resilient socio-economic systems on our continent and with the right policies, it can anchor the future we aspire to build.

Thank you.