



PEACE, PROSPERITY AND
REGIONAL INTEGRATION

2nd State of the IGAD Region Address

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“IGAD IS INTACT”

***Countering the Compound Challenge of Conflict, Climate Change
and Covid-19***



- Your Excellencies, the distinguished **Members of the IGAD Committee of Ambassadors;**
- Honourable representatives of our **fellow citizens of the IGAD region** drawn from the various cross-border cluster areas;
- Our **esteemed partners both here and outside the region** who have joined us online;
- My **Brothers and Sisters, Members of the IGAD Family;**
- **Fellow Citizens** of the IGAD Region;
- **Ladies and Gentlemen;**
- **All protocols observed.**



1. It is indeed a **privilege and honour to have the opportunity to deliver the 2nd State of the Region Address**. This annual reflection comes as **I commemorate my 2 years in office and mark the half-way point of my first term** as the Executive Secretary of our illustrious organisation.
2. 375 days ago, at a time like this, we gathered here in the historic city of Mombasa for the maiden state of the IGAD region address. In the 1 year and 10 days that have elapsed, we have witnessed **seismic events in our region that have tried our collective resolve and tested our resilience**.



3. If 2020 was a difficult year for our region, 2021 laid even more difficult challenges at our feet and exacted a heavy toll on our resolve.

4. I will once more open this year's state of the region address by **inviting us all to meditate on the preamble of the 1996 agreement establishing IGAD.** The paragraphs of the preamble set out the aspirations of our forerunners for the future generations to come, of which we are the first.



5. **We are determined to overcome and recover from the multitude of challenges that continue to beset us even now.**

6. And in keeping with our reputation as adaptive innovators, **we will find and create opportunities to bounce back bigger, better and bolder.**

7. The **orientation of our biggest challenges in 2021 shifted** from the natural hazards posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Desert Locust Invasions and Flooding and **pivoted abruptly to focus on Peace, Security and Stability.**



8. It is at this point that I would like us all to **appreciate the foresight of the founding fathers of IGAD who 10 years after the establishment of our august organisation, convened on the 25th of November 1996** to lead the way in examining the other deterrents to development affecting our region and consider effective ways of overcoming them.

9. Our founding fathers were of the same mind as **the late Samora Machel**, President of the Republic of Mozambique and a true son of Africa who once said,



“International solidarity is not an act of charity; It is an act of unity between allies on different terrains, moving toward the same objective. And the foremost of these objectives is to aid the development of humanity to the highest level possible.”

10. From a one-dimensional institution whose focus was confined to responding to drought and related natural disasters, **our leaders armed the revitalised IGAD with an enlarged mandate that among other priorities, opened the door for IGAD to intercede in the fundamental issue of peace, security and stability.**



11. In responding to this and any other conflict issues affecting our region, IGAD has always been guided by the provisions set out in Article 6(A) of the 1996 agreement establishing IGAD which mandates us to;

“Maintain regional peace, stability and security by pursuing the peaceful settlement of both inter-State and intra-State conflicts through dialogue while at the same time, respecting the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States and upholding their sovereign equality.”



Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

12. The **internal challenges affecting 2 of our largest Member States**, our Chair the Republic of Sudan and our Rapporteur, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia **is undeniably a cause of serious anxiety within our region and beyond.**

13. In the case of Sudan, the disruption of the transition to civilian rule in September of this year became a matter of grave concern not only for IGAD, but the international community as well.



14. This situation also **threatened to undermine public confidence in the progress that had been made so far in re-admitting Sudan to the community of nations.**

15. Furthermore, these developments **endangered the tireless mediation efforts** led by H.E. President Salva Kiir **lasting over 21 months, and culminating in the historic Juba Peace Agreement** to end the war in Darfur that was signed in June of this year, **to which IGAD is a guarantor.**



16. IGAD was **therefore greatly relieved that last month, the government of Sudan listened the call to reinstate Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, restore civilian rule** and release of political leaders that had been detained.

17. However, as the situation is still active, **IGAD remains fully engaged in Sudan and is committed to work with the government to fulfil the aspirations of the people of Sudan.**



Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

18. **Within this framework, IGAD has therefore been actively engaged in applying “Quiet Diplomacy”** through the good offices of our various heads of state and government, **as an instrument for resolving the peace and security challenges prevalent in our region.**

19. In this regard, we are particularly grateful for the efforts made by the people of Sudan, all parties to the conflict and the international community towards resolving this situation.



20. IGAD therefore **reiterates its call upon the people and government of Sudan to remain engaged in constructive dialogue and positive actions geared towards the return of civilian rule** and the realization of the aspirations reflected in the 2019 – 2024 roadmap to civilian leadership outlined in the peace agreement.



Excellencies;

21. As IGAD citizens, **the situation in Ethiopia has filled us all with concern.** Ethiopia has for the longest time been a Pillar of Peace and Security, a beacon of stability and an anchor for economic development in the IGAD region. It has the **singular distinction of being the only uncolonized state in the entire continent of Africa.**

22. As a nation, Ethiopians have **always worn this badge with honour and recognised the obligation that comes with this status to be champions of liberty everywhere.**



23. The **historical record speaks clearly to the pivotal role that Ethiopia played in the liberation struggle** of her sister countries in Africa.

24. **As the Headquarters of our Continental Union,** and in addition to all the reasons that I have elaborated upon before, it is of utmost importance for IGAD and Africa at large that the situation in Ethiopia does not escalate any further and a solution is found as soon as possible, while respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ethiopia.



25. **IGAD places great confidence and trust in the wisdom of Ethiopians** to chart the path to a lasting peace and **calls upon all people of goodwill to be in solidarity with Ethiopia** as it works to find a lasting solution to the conflict.

26. **Within the framework of our delegated mandate,** IGAD has been working in close conjunction with the leadership of the region to resolve this conflict.



27. I therefore want to **take this opportunity to acknowledge the timely efforts of H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya** who has been working tirelessly on behalf of IGAD to prevail upon the Government of Ethiopia to resolve this conflict.

28. IGAD further appreciates the efforts of **H.E. President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti, H.E. President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, H.E President Salva Kiir of South Sudan** and **H.E President Abdullahi Farmaajo of Somalia** who each in their own unique way, are working with the government of Ethiopia to end the conflict.



29. IGAD also deeply **appreciates the ongoing efforts being made by the other ambassadors of peace from Africa and across the world**, who have also been working diligently to bring about a final resolution to the conflict.
30. Regional peace and security has also begun recording some setbacks as a result of the ripple-effect of these active conflicts. **Of principal concern is a weakening of the regional response to *A/-Shabaab* and other terror groups.** We are also alive to the prospect of these conflicts facilitating the further proliferation of illegal firearms into the region.



31. Already we have **documented an increase in the number of terror attacks in Somalia**, observed the escape and re-apprehension of terror suspects in Kenya.

32. **Most sadly, we witnessed the bombings in Kampala that claimed the lives of innocent people.** At this juncture, I take this opportunity **on behalf of IGAD to once again categorically condemn all acts of terror and extend our condolences** to the victims, families and friends who have been affected by these heinous attacks.



33. In all instances, IGAD deeply regrets the loss of life, destruction of property, violations of human rights and the looming humanitarian crises that have arisen as a result of these conflict situations.

My Fellow Citizens and Partners,

34. Turning now to South Sudan, I will **begin by drawing our attention to the tremendous progress the country has made** in implementing the peace agreement, and particularly Chapter 1 on governance arrangements.



35. I would however **like to emphasize that the successful implementation of Chapter 2 on the Permanent Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements will mark a turning point for the peace process in South Sudan.**

36. It is issues around the implementation of provisions of this chapter that triggered an internal dispute within SPLM/IO and resulted in clashes in the border area of Jabal Magen in August of this year.



37. **IGAD immediately engaged with the parties to the internal dispute and encouraged the opening of avenues for dialogue.**

Our engagement established that the unification and redeployment of the Necessary Unified Forces is an urgent priority for the Republic of South Sudan.

38. In this regard, IGAD in conjunction with our partners on the ground is providing the necessary political support and **have called upon the revitalised transitional government to allocate and avail the required financial and material resources** for this undertaking.



39. IGAD similarly **calls upon the international community to lift those sanctions that are obstacles to the effective implementation of the Revitalised Agreement** on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan.
40. IGAD also **welcomes the recent overtures of H.E. President Yoweri Museveni**, alongside Kenya’s Special Envoy to South Sudan and the Troika Partners **to hold the long-overdue retreat for the leadership of South Sudan as a confidence-building measure to accelerate the implementation of the peace agreement.**



Ladies and Gentlemen:

41. In Somalia, IGAD also **led in convening and coordinating partners to prevail upon the leadership to peacefully resolve disputes that arose in the run-up to elections.**

42. With these upcoming elections, **Somalia stands at the crossroads of destiny.** They symbolise a historic moment in the country's road to revival, recovery and renaissance.



43. Whilst the process for the upper house was completed successfully last month, **the process for the lower house is ongoing with and IGAD looks forward to its successful conclusion.**
44. **IGAD has been supporting the democratic transition and remains fully committed to assist the people and government of Somalia to avert any regression to conflict and instability.**
45. To counter-balance the challenges we have been experiencing in peace and security, I am gratified to note that IGAD has also recorded some opportunities and successes.



46. First and foremost, **Djibouti, Kenya and Uganda have remained oases of peace amidst the turbulence that has affected the region.**

47. IGAD takes this opportunity to **congratulate H.E. President Yoweri Museveni and the people of Uganda** for holding peaceful elections in January.

48. IGAD further **applauds our Host Country, and H.E. the President Ismail Omar Guelleh**, for the fresh mandate accorded to him to lead the nation by the people of Djibouti in April.



49. In the same vein, IGAD **congratulates H.E. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali** for the successful elections held in Ethiopia during the month of June this year.

50. The **upcoming elections in Somalia and Kenya will serve as a litmus test of how deep constitutionalism has taken root in our region.** As IGAD, we wish the governments and people of Kenya and Somalia, peaceful and successful democratic elections.



51. **IGAD is optimistic that democratic principles will continue to be upheld** and the practice of peaceful resolution of dispute through legal channels will be further entrenched for all electoral processes in the region.

52. At this juncture, **let me remind this gathering that we are all stakeholders in peacebuilding.** This is why I am also pleased to acknowledge the efforts at the grassroots level that IGAD has initiated to complement the high-level peacebuilding interventions that I have previously mentioned.



53. Specifically, I want to **commend the efforts that have been made to engage the youth and women** in peacebuilding. **Thomas Sankara, the revolutionary former President of Burkina Faso** once said;

"There is no true social revolution without the liberation of women".

In IGAD we say, **there cannot be real peace, security or prosperity without women and the youth.**



54. I am therefore **delighted to connect with our new efforts to build peace from below** through initiatives such as the IGAD Youth & Women's Forum for Peace, the young poets and filmmakers who as peace ambassadors are working to counter the radicalisation of our youth.
55. I also **welcome the formulation of the preventative diplomacy and mediation protocol** which will further enhance our capacity to intervene in situations of conflict.



Excellencies;

56. Let me now turn to the other developmental issues in our region. I will begin with the coronavirus which has been with us now for 2 long years.
57. Over this period the **prevalence of the disease has risen four times** with infections increasing from a **quarter of a million** this time last year, **to almost 900,000 at this time**. It has also **claimed 4 times as many of our brothers and sisters from 5,000 at this time last year to 20,241 this year**.



58. **Let us pay tribute to our courageous healthcare workers who have risked everything to keep us safe and also** honour the memory of all those who have been taken away from us by this pandemic.
59. In keeping with my period so far in office, **we are now in our second year of implementing the Regional Emergency Response Strategy to COVID-19.** Here, with the tremendous support of our partners from the European Union, the African Development Bank and GIZ among others, we have logged an equal number of successes and challenges.



60. On one hand, this response strategy has made remarkable progress in **identifying our most vulnerable populations spread across 45 cross border intervention sites in 7 countries**. The strategy has reached more than 1.9 million people to deliver 6.2 million PPEs and 177,000 test kits.

61. Additionally, **IGAD has been facilitating the delivery of critical equipment** consisting of 22 ambulances, 7 field-utility vehicles, 7 mobile laboratories and 14 PCR machines.



62. **This equipment is supplementing the capacity of our Member States for the prevention, testing and tracing of the Coronavirus in cross-border areas.**

63. These efforts are critical at a time when our region and indeed the African continent is still far behind the rest of the world in vaccination. As we speak, **the average rate of vaccination in the IGAD region stands at only 6.6%. This is against a global average of 42.7% or 7 times more than we have vaccinated our people.**



64. More worryingly, according to our continental health Authorities, **Africa has recorded an 83% increase in infections this past week alone that has been attributed to the Delta and newly emergent Omicron variants of Covid-19 that** is reportedly more transmissible and resistant to selected vaccines.
65. I am therefore compelled to caution that bearing these factors in mind, **IGAD and Africa at large is now perhaps even more vulnerable than before to the worst effects of this pandemic.**



Ladies and Gentlemen:

66. At this point in my address, I **would therefore like to issue a special call to our partners to sit with us once more as we review our interventions and adjust them towards responding to what is most needed by our people** within the context of this emergency situation.
67. We must therefore remain faithful to our original intention to strengthen our health systems to have adequate capacity to cope with this and other pandemics.



68. **There is no alternative to enhancing the region’s capability to test, trace and vaccinate** the most vulnerable sections of our population. And this is because **none of us is safe until all of us, without exception is safe.**
69. Alongside Conflict and Covid are the **twin threats of drought and flooding which combined pose a significant threat to the food security status of our region. The IGAD Component 2021 Global Report on Food Crises concludes that an estimated 37.2 million or 1 out of every 7** people are expected to be acutely food insecure in our region.



70. **This Cocktail of Climate Change, Conflict and Covid-19 therefore continues to drive displacement** in our region as a consequence of the challenges they pose to the physical, economic and social security of our people.
71. In the IGAD region at approximately 5%, **we have one of the highest rates of displacement totalling 12.3 million people which consisting of 4.2 million refugees and 8.1 million internally displaced persons.**



72. In order to mitigate these challenges, **IGAD recognised the need for a comprehensive response strategy that is designed to simultaneously and effectively address multiple and mutually reinforcing hazards as they emerge.**
73. I am **encouraged by the efforts IGAD made in 2021 to originate a Regional Disaster Risk Management Strategy.** In October this year, H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta launched the IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC) which houses a state-of-the-art Weather Forecast and Modelling Unit and Disaster Operations Centre.



74. The information generated by the centre significantly enhances our multi-hazard early warning and response capabilities and **is being used by Member States and partners to anticipate, predict and mitigate climate change and related natural disasters** such as floods, drought and pests such as desert locusts.
75. IGAD has **every intention of further building this capacity by establishing similar disaster monitoring situation units** across all our Member States in 2022.



76. At the same time, **IGAD has been putting in place policy assets and robust mechanisms to stimulate economic development in the region and where possible, reverse the outward flow of migration.**

77. Two weeks ago, I was delighted to preside in Ali Sabieh, Djibouti over the launch of a 4.2-million-dollar project for infrastructure-development and livelihoods support targeting refugees and host communities in our region.



78. Altogether, projects such as these supported by our policy instruments such as the Protocols on Free Movement and Transhumance, the Regional Infrastructure Masterplan, our Blue Economy Strategy among many others, **are the building blocks through which we will build our regional structures** and deliver on our commitment to the continental integration agenda through the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement.

Excellencies;

79. This **brings me to my intentions for the next 2 years; and here I will classify them into 2 categories.**



80. **Let me start with the exterior category,** and this speaks to how the IGAD region responds to the prevailing challenges, presents itself and is perceived by the world. **The fundamental priorities in this instance are three-fold.**

81. **The first priority is the restoration of peace, security and stability in the region.** This is because it is the bedrock upon which all other interventions are to be built upon. Here, IGAD commits to continue working in tandem with our member states and like-minded partners to realize peaceful outcomes to active conflicts in the region.



82. **The second priority is effective prediction, prevention and response to slow and sudden onset disasters.**

83. Already, **IGAD has the makings of a Disaster Response Strategy** and following the launch of the Disaster Operations Centre in Nairobi on the 27th of October this year, **further commits to animate the Disaster Fund** that was endorsed by the 38th Extraordinary Assembly of IGAD Heads of State and Government in December 2020.



84. **The third priority is regional integration from below using the principle of manageable instalments.**

85. **It is my intention to inspire the formulation of IGAD-owned and IGAD-led projects** that will accelerate our regional integration agenda at the community level and complement existing initiatives that have been generously funded by our partners.



86. This approach constitutes the primary thrust of **our intention to “take IGAD to the people”** by directing a fraction of the resources we mobilise from our Member States **towards projects that directly benefit our citizens.**
87. For instance, in the Mandera triangle, **I was particularly impressed by the levels of regional integration and community inter-dependence through shared health facilities** that bring together the people of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.



88. **However, the lack of a usable bridge spanning the River Dawa limits the ability of the community to full advantage of the available health facilities.** IGAD has undertaken to work closely with the national and international authorities to address this gap in regional integration.

Dear Colleagues;

89. Looking inward at the interior category of intentions for the next 2 years, **I find that the roadmap for reform and revitalisation that I shared with you a year ago during my inaugural State of the Region Address remains sufficiently comprehensive to guide us in this regard.**



90. Last year, **I methodically reported on the far-reaching reform agenda that we formulated to systematically transform IGAD into an organisation for the 21st century.**
91. The reform initiative focuses **creating a conducive environment for the implementation of the new IGAD Strategic Plan 2021-2025 which we will launch here today.**
92. IGAD expects that the 6-pillars that support the architecture of the **strategy will act as both a blueprint and guideline for the upcoming reporting period between 2030 and 2063.**



93. Within this timeframe we shall be **taking stock of the extent to which we have fulfilled our shared aspirations** as articulated in the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the AU's Continental transformation and integration agenda.

94. This is the **logic that inspired us to break with tradition and instead of formulating a short 5-year strategy, we elected to think bigger, longer and farther.**

95. As a consequence, the IGAD Regional Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025 is **the first in a series of 6 sub-strategies, each running for 5 years, that are to be sequentially implemented towards the Grand Vision of IGAD 2050.**



96. I am encouraged by the scale of our ambition and our deliberate decision to prepare and plan for the next generation by casting our eyes 30 years ahead.

97. It is our intention **to accelerate the process of setting a firm foundation for the security, development and prosperity of the estimated 400 million People** that will be living in our region by 2050.



98. The 7 principal priorities under the reform initiative included;

- i. Revamping the human resource structure and improving internal human resource capacity
- ii. Digital transformation of the IGAD Secretariat
- iii. Construction of the new IGAD Headquarters
- iv. Instituting the IGAD Cancer Centre of Excellence
- v. Establishing and implementing an awards and scholarships programme
- vi. Creating the IGAD Committee of Eminent Persons
- vii. Qualifying for the EU Pillar Assessment in order to directly manage funding from our partners.



99. **Let me begin with the brick-and-mortar projects;** last year I was pleased to have hosted the IGAD Chair, H.E. Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok at the ground-breaking ceremony for the new IGAD Headquarters in Djibouti.

100. This year, we successfully completed the structural design of the building **which represents the face of the region.** With the building now provisionally costed at 55.4 million US Dollars, **I will be delighted to formally launch the call for construction bids today.**



101. **In April of this year, we broke ground on the IGAD Cancer Centre of Excellence that will be in Addis Ababa** and we are aggressively building partnerships for its funding and operations.

102. I want to **thank the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the leadership of the municipality of Addis Ababa** for allocating the IGAD Cancer Centre a prime piece of land in the capital city **valued at over 200 million Dollars.**



103. **I also express my sincerest gratitude to the IGAD Partners Forum and the Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia who generously supported the initial and critical stage of the regional Cancer Initiative by donating 500,000 dollars.**

104. In the realm of building intellectual capacity in our region, **today we will be also formally launching a call for applications for the first 300 scholarships** that will support of students from vulnerable communities to have access to higher education at the International University of Africa in Khartoum, Sudan and Kampala International University in Uganda.



105. This scholarship programme will be our flagship project for integration through education.

106. **My conviction is this;**

If our young people from the across the region go to the same schools and eat from the same academic plate, the future of our regional integration agenda will benefit considerably from the bonds of friendship and brotherhood that our young people and future leaders will have forged in their formative years.



107. To strengthen the ability of IGAD to drive our efforts at peace-building from below and safeguard the prospects for security and stability, **I am pleased to announce in this address the launch of the IGAD Leadership Academy.**

108. I am confident that with the support of our Member States and partners, **the IGAD Leadership Academy will grow into a house that brings together, grooms and nurtures the next generation of leaders** who will steer our region to even greater heights of harmony and progress.



Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

109. As you most certainly appreciate, **the scale of our ambition can only be attained if we are able to marshal the resources to realize it.**

110. I am happy to report that during my time in office, IGAD has witnessed a tremendous improvement in the levels political will and financial commitment by our Member States many of whom are meeting their obligations in full and on time.



111. However, there is still room for improvement; In order for IGAD to shore up our credibility as a rules-based organisation and build our capacity to complement the efforts of our generous partners, **it is imperative that the burden of responsibility is equitably shared by all of our Member States.**
112. At this juncture I also want to take this opportunity **to acknowledge and sincerely appreciate the support of our firm friends and partners** including, the European Union and its Member States, the World Bank, African Development Bank and UN Agencies as well as members of the IGAD Partners Forum and Troika Countries.



113. IGAD is **also thankful for the cordial relations and bilateral ties we enjoy with new and emerging partners**

Excellencies, Colleagues and partners;

114. I will conclude this year's annual address, with the observation that **our collective desire to prevail over the most difficult of circumstances is what has come to define us through the decades.** We cannot change the geography of our region and we cannot choose our neighbours. In other words, the maps cannot re-draw themselves.



115. We are **bound now and for all time by the geographic, cultural and economic ties that bind us and we are inseparably connected to each other.**

116. This means that **we stand a better chance of overcoming our difficulties and thriving if we pool our resources and efforts together.**

Thank you for your kind attention.