

**Patrick Wilson's Remarks at the  
Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Drought Disaster  
Resilience & Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI) General Assembly  
March 19, 2021 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM  
Sarova White Sands, Mombasa  
Patrick will attend \*Virtually\***

Your Excellency the Executive Secretary of IGAD Dr Workneh Gebeyehu;  
Honorable Christophe Bazivamo Deputy Executive Secretary of the East African  
Community; Cabinet Secretary, Kenya Ministry of Devolution & ASALs, Eugene  
Wamalwa; Honorable Ministers; Governors; representatives from IGAD member  
states; and development partners, and for anyone I have failed to mention, please  
forgive me -- all protocols observed --

Good morning.

The official United States Government representative to the Intergovernmental  
Authority on Development, Ambassador Jonathan Pratt, extends his regrets that  
obligations in Djibouti have prevented him from traveling to Mombasa to be with you  
today.

Through our work at the USAID Kenya and East Africa Mission, we work closely  
with Ambassador Pratt and his team to support IGAD and resilience building and  
inclusive economic growth in the region.

On behalf of the Global Alliance for Action for Drought Resilience and Growth, it's a  
pleasure to be here at the IDDRSI General Assembly. Living in the region for the  
past 4 years, I have seen the ravaging effects drought, locusts and other crises have on  
communities.

I look forward to discussing how development partners can continue to support your  
efforts in achieving sustainable development and to address these recurrent shocks  
and stresses in a holistic and coordinated way.

The Global Alliance has provided considerable financial and political support to  
resilience building efforts in the Horn of Africa in the ten years since IGAD's call for  
support to end drought emergencies in this region.

This support has led to improvements in diversified livelihoods, increased resilience  
capacities, better early warning and early action, coordinated and joint planning of  
interventions, and improved government systems to address shocks and stresses.

While we have put resources into IGAD, it is the IGAD team that has been instrumental in articulating and advocating for a bold vision like the IDDRSI strategy, and honoring commitments to member states and donors to deliver on resilience building initiatives. We acknowledge and appreciate all your efforts.

However, despite billions of dollars in assistance over the last several years, the number of people in need of humanitarian aid has increased as a result of multiple shocks, including conflict and extreme weather.

Women, children, nomadic people, and cross-border populations are particularly vulnerable to these recurrent shocks.

As Global Alliance partners, we remain committed to gathering the political and financial support to build resilience and sustainable development in the Horn of Africa -- not only from donors and development partners, but also from all of you.

Together, we can do better to make progress here in the region, protecting those most vulnerable and reducing the need for humanitarian relief.

To achieve this, we need to focus on specific, measurable actions, including:

First, IGAD member states must **allocate adequate resources to address regional challenges** that transcend borders and to address the root causes of recurrent crises and other risks. People across the Horn of Africa need your regional leadership and ownership.

Second, just as people across the Horn need to plan for shocks and stresses, member states also need to be prepared. As you all know, it is not a matter of IF shocks will happen, but WHEN they will happen.

Over the last year we have seen drought, floods, some of the worst locust swarms in more than half a century, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Being well-prepared is essential.

We encourage IGAD member states to **integrate disaster risk management into their development planning and budgeting processes**. We also encourage you to build your own contingency reserve funds, so that needed reserves are there during economic turmoil.

When an emergency or economic crisis hits, these reserves can be used to provide resources for early response to mitigate damage and avoid disaster. Member states can also explore the development of a regional fund to jointly address risks that transcend borders and impact the region as a whole.

One encouraging example of how this can work can be found here in Kenya. Kenya has integrated disaster risk management into its national and county development planning processes through the Ending Drought Emergency mechanism.

The creation of the National Drought Emergency Fund by the Government of Kenya shows a policy shift towards drought risk management BEFORE the shock arrives, rather than crisis response AFTER the shock hits.

Kenya is taking a proactive approach to ending droughts, and this proactive approach can be extended to other types of disasters and emergencies.

Third, in addition to increasing contributions to IGAD and making your own contingency plans, the Global Alliance calls on you to **expand your social protection programs** and to strengthen the coping and adaptive capacities of people and their livelihoods.

Countries in this region have varying levels of safety nets, such as providing cash and other services to the most vulnerable populations to increase efficiency, coverage, and targeting. Ethiopia and other countries' social protection systems that cover a greater proportion of citizens through domestic resources is an example to emulate.

Finally, **borders matter**. How the member states of IGAD deal with their borders is critical.

There are not only geographical borders in this region, but also there are invisible borders that make it difficult to have a unified approach to making progress in the region. You might even say there are borders between development partners.

We need a multidimensional collaborative platform that operates across borders and donors, and which puts the actions and responsibilities of IGAD member states here in the region at the center.

While each of you has a part to play in further protecting your populations against risk and emergency, our collective action across borders to make progress in the region has to be better coordinated.

How do we get there? With joint annual work planning and investment reviews, we can map out what all of us are doing in the IGAD clusters and identify areas where we add the greatest value to addressing the challenges across the region.

And as development partners, we at the Global Alliance must challenge ourselves to have a more coordinated and joint effort with everyone here.

When we do, we will be able to strengthen the resilience of those most vulnerable, and this region can make real progress toward sustained stability and prosperity.

More shocks are coming. But the work we have done together over the years, and the direction we take together here today, will improve our ability to address those shocks sustainably, effectively, and to the benefit of the tens of millions of people who live in this region.

Together we can achieve sustainable impact to improve the lives of the people in each of your countries. That's why we're here together today. So let's get to work!

Thank you.