

**IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience & Sustainability Initiative
(IDDRSI) Platform Steering Committee & General Assembly
Meetings**
Theme: Consolidating the Path to Resilience and Sustainability
18 – 19 March 2021 | Virtual Meeting

Remarks by Dr. Chimimba David Phiri, FAO SRC-SFE

PROTOCOL:

- Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, IGAD Executive Secretary; and our host
- H.E. Eltahir Ismail Mohamed Harbi, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Sudan;
- Hon. Eugene Wamalwa, Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Devolution and the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs), Republic of Kenya;
- Distinguished Government Representatives
- Distinguished Representatives of Development Partners present;
- Ladies and Gentlemen;

It gives me great pleasure to address this gathering of the IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI) General Assembly Meeting. I wish to sincerely thank IGAD and Member States teams and the development partners for their continued dedication in ending drought and promoting resilience efforts both at individual and community level in the IGAD region.

FAO and IGAD have a long-standing history of successful partnership and collaboration, touching on several areas, including but not limited to:

- Livelihood support to strengthen resilience against droughts;
- Food security information and analysis;
- Early warning and disaster risk management;
- Implementation of cross border actions in close collaboration with the respective communities, local and national authorities;
- Conflict prevention;
- Natural resource management;
- Market access and trade; and
- Capacity building, institutional strengthening and coordination.

FAO was part of the design and implementation of the first phase of the IDDRSI platform, which aimed at building the resilience of vulnerable communities to the effects of recurrent droughts and other disasters so that cyclic droughts and other shocks do not develop into regional emergencies. The IDDRSI programme is also intended to help member states achieve economic growth and sustainable development with the ultimate goal of ending hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Eastern Africa and the IGAD region have been the epicenter of multiple emergencies, often resulting in extreme poverty, severe hunger and malnutrition, socio-economic difficulties, high level of youth unemployment

and distress migration, due to the combined effects of , protracted conflicts and political instability, climatic shocks such as droughts and floods,, and animal and plant pests and diseases.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Most of the population in this region rely on rain-fed agriculture and related activities for their livelihoods, thus have limited capacity to cope with the impact of these multiple shocks, especially frequent droughts. FAO therefore continues to collaborate with IGAD in the design and implementation of the resilience building programmes.

The current second phase of the IDDRSI platform will, for sure, build on the experience and best practices from the previous phase; it would help member states minimize impact of shocks to livelihoods by promoting food security and nutrition, hence improve community and household resilience, particularly among vulnerable groups in marginal areas .

There have been several successful and shared efforts by governments and partners in building the resilience of vulnerable communities to threats and crises to address the food and nutrition insecurity and to attain the aspirations of the people in region, the Sustainable Development Goals and the AU Malabo Commitments. FAO wishes to acknowledge the generous financial support given by the governments of several development partners

towards building community resilience through strengthening surveillance and early warning systems and early action in response to the management and control of the desert locust infestation in Eastern Africa, particularly in Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya that were the worst affected. Your support has enabled FAO, IGAD, Member States and other partners to respond to the devastating impact of the desert locust thus strengthening livelihoods resilience.

Finally, I wish to confirm FAO's continued commitment to work with and support IGAD and partners in implementation of programmes under the IDDRSI strategy within and across member countries, as this is a demonstration of regional and cross-border institutional coordination, collaboration and cooperation in ending emergencies that escalate into humanitarian crises and disasters in Eastern Africa and the IGAD region.

Thank you for your kind attention.