

TALKING POINTS / SPEECH BY H.E. Dr Workneh Gebeyehu, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, INTER-GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY ON DEVELOPMENT (IGAD) & CHAIRMAN OF THE IDDRSI PLATFORM STEERING COMMITTEE

**13TH MEETING OF THE IDDRSI PLATFORM STEERING COMMITTEE
NAIVASHA, KENYA, 30TH NOVEMBER 2021**

- *Hon. Abdul Bahari, Chief Administrative Secretary, representing Prof. Margaret Kobia, Cabinet Secretary, for the Ministry of Public Service, Gender, Senior Citizen Affairs and Special Programs in Kenya*
- *Dr Senait Regassa, the distinguished representative of Sweden*
- *The distinguished representative of the Global Alliance, Mrs Jennifer Maurer, from the USAID*
- *Senior Officials representing IGAD Member States, Development Partners and Non-State Actors; Members of the IDDRSI Platform Steering Committee, Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen.*

On behalf of H.E. Dr Workneh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary of IGAD and Chairman of the IDDRSI Platform Steering Committee, who sends you all warm greetings, but is unable to be with us here this morning and has assigned me to represent him, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this meeting of the IDDRSI Platform Steering Committee. I would like, at the outset, to extend a note of thanks to all the participants, whether you are physically present here in Naivasha or joining the meeting online, for finding the time to attend this meeting. We highly appreciate your partnership, fellowship and solidarity.

As IGAD, our core mandate is defined by the critical issues and challenges in the IGAD region. As you all know, our region's greatest single defining imperative is the urgent need to build the resilience of our communities to enable them cope with the problem of severe, recurrent droughts and related environmental and socio-economic shocks.

Approximately 70% of the area of the IGAD region is categorized as arid and semi-arid lands. The livelihood system in such areas is predominantly dryland farming, with pastoral and agro pastoral production; all of which are always at the risk and mercy of the impacts of climate variability. Indeed, the region remains one of the most vulnerable regions to food insecurity in the world. This situation is frequently aggravated by severe and recurrent droughts and is greatly exacerbated by the simultaneous occurrence of other disasters, including floods, desert locust invasion, conflicts and recently, the

COVID-19 pandemic, all of which have caused a highly precarious situation that has now become known as the new normal.

As we meet, today, there is an ongoing drought that is currently widespread in the IGAD region, resulting from the third consecutive below-average rainfall season since last year. Experts have warned that the drought is likely to intensify and significantly worsen food insecurity throughout most of next year. Amid these alarming trends of the difficulties in food availability and access, the delayed and below-average rainfall in the October, November and December 2021 season is expected to further erode household food and income and negatively impact crop and livestock production.

The new normal calls for special diligence in the way we do things and requires innovative plans, strategies and policies; as well as new commitments and reaffirmations. There is an urgent need to re-double our efforts, going forward. In this connection, the IGAD region, has, over the past nearly 10 years, been actively engaged in the implementation of an initiative that involves building resilience to drought; and has attracted investments in sustainable development.

IGAD's plan to end drought emergencies, build drought resilience and achieve growth and sustainable development in the Horn of Africa has become the region's most versatile development framework. IDDRSI is evolving into an integrative and mobilizing force that serves as an effective rallying point to drive the region's development agenda. A common regional strategy has been translated into country programming papers for interventions at national level and a regional programming paper for activities at regional or cross-border levels. The region is now in the middle of implementing the second phase of the three 5-year phases that comprise the 15-year strategy of IDDRSI.

IGAD Member States and their Development Partners agreed to form the IDDRSI Platform: the very forum that has brought us together today, in order to have an opportunity to regularly examine the region's priorities and possibilities for intervention, review the progress, share experiences and facilitate the designing of corrective measures, to help maintain the desired course, promote regional cohesion and enhance international cooperation. The tremendous response so far mounted by the affected countries, most notably by Kenya, Djibouti and Ethiopia is commendable and there is evidence of commitment to the objectives of IDDRSI in all the countries. The

efforts of the IDDRSI Platform Coordination Unit are noteworthy; and the country coordination mechanisms are finally getting their act together. The goodwill shown by the region's development partners, to support the implementation of IDDRSI, in spite of the global economic down trend, donor fatigue and a multitude of challenges, is gratifying.

As a regional initiative, the implementation of IDDRSI has created a strong political momentum, which has resulted in greater commitment by countries and their development partners; and has been successful in stimulating resource mobilization and promoting increased investments. IDDRSI has also been commended as an effective framework for inter-state cooperation that has shown strong promise in addressing common challenges, with particular application in facilitating expedited resilience enhancement in cross-border areas. IGAD has prepared 3 sets of programming proposals for resilience-building in cross-border development. During the 12th meeting of the Steering Committee, the set of programming proposals for the IGAD Cluster 1 (also commonly known as the Karamoja Cluster) were adopted and have since formed the basis for resource mobilization. Yesterday, a High-Level Ministerial meeting, held here in Naivasha, adopted the proposals for the IGAD Cluster 2; and a similar meeting for the Dikhil Cluster is scheduled to be held in Djibouti on 7th December 2021. The availability of proposals for interventions that address concerns identified in dialogues with the affected cross-border communities, is expected to bring much needed focus on the development of cross-border areas.

In conclusion, my observation is that IGAD Member States recognize the seriousness of the impacts of climate change and related phenomena; and appreciate the effectiveness of IDDRSI as a comprehensive mechanism to build resilience to the challenges of the ecological circumstance of our new normal. The IDDRSI Platform Steering Committee plays a significant role in the implementation of IDDRSI and I thank its members for the continued vigilance and solidarity. Working together as a region is decidedly feasible and is certainly a major contribution towards our collective objective of building resilience within the context of our vision of achieving peace, prosperity and regional integration. Furthermore, the continued interest demonstrated by our development partners throughout the past 10 years in honouring their pledge to support the implementation of the IDDRSI Strategy inspires hope and is highly appreciated.

Finally, I wish to thank the people and Government of the Republic of Kenya for once again hosting the meeting of this committee; and for the wonderful hospitality, especially in these difficult times of the COVID-19 pandemic. We acknowledge, with deep appreciation, Kenya's role as resilience champion in the region

On behalf of H.E. Workneh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary of IGAD and Chairman of the IDDRSI Platform Steering Committee, I would like to thank all the members of the Steering Committee as well as all the other participants for finding the time to join us in our efforts to find solutions to the region's problem of drought and related challenges. I look forward to our deliberations.

I thank you all.