

Good morning,

I am delivering this speech representing USAID Ethiopia DMD, Dr James Dobson, as he couldn't make it to this meeting

Your Excellency Mr Awira Anthony, representing HE Dr Wokeneh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary, IGAD

Your Excellency Dr Fikru Regassa State Minister for Ministry of Agriculture FDRE
Distinguished Delegates from IGAD State Countries,
Ladies and Gentle me

On behalf of the Global Alliance for Action for Drought Resilience and Growth and broader development partners, it's a pleasure to be here at the IDDRSI General Assembly.

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

This support has led to improvements in diversified livelihoods, livestock productivity and competitiveness, increased resilience capacities, better early warning and early action, coordinated and joint planning of interventions, and improved government systems to address shocks and stresses. USAID instituted Crisis Modifier funding approach within the regular Resilience project to timely respond to emergencies to protect livelihoods, that all of us can draw lessons.

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 humanitarian assistance over the last decade, the number of people in need of humanitarian aid has increased as a result of recurring crises, including drought, desert locusts, and conflict. These shocks are undermining the development gains in the region. Of particular concern is recurrent drought and the impact of Russia Ukraine war on food security in the region.

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

Together, we 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.

- 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.
- 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. As we are experiencing now in the HORN.
- **As I said Earlier, Disaster risk management needs to be integrated into development planning and budgeting processes.** We also encourage you to build your own contingency reserve funds, so that needed resources are available during economic turmoil.

One encouraging example of how this can work can be found 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.

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 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's PSNP and other countries' social protection systems that cover a greater proportion of citizens through domestic resources is another example to learn from.

Finally, as we all know **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.

And as development partners, we at the Global Alliance must challenge ourselves to have a more coordinated and joint effort with everyone here. With coordinated effort, we can make real progress towards resilience capacities building, sustained stability and prosperity in the region.

Socks will come in the future, but the work we have been doing 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 is why we are here together today in solidarity and leveraging each other's strengths.

We are looking forward to sustained cooperation for the benefit of the people in the region.

Thank you.