

**OFFICIAL REMARKS**  
**WORKNEH GEBEYEHU (PhD)**  
**IGAD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**  
**IDDRSI Platform General Assembly,**  
**24 November 2023, Entebbe, Uganda**

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- **Your Excellency, Hon. Esther Anyakun; State Minister for Disaster Preparedness, Refugees and Management; the Republic of Uganda.**
- **Your Excellency, Hon. Abubakr Omer Elbushra, Minister, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, The Republic of Sudan.**
- **Your Excellency, Hon. Minister Adan Mohamed Ali (MP) of the Federal Ministry of Livestock, Forestry & Range (MoLFR), Federal Republic of Somalia.**
- **Your Excellency, Amb. Margaret Daniel, Chargé d’Affairs, Embassy of the Republic of South Sudan in Uganda, representing H.E Ms Josephine Napwon Cosmos; Minister of Environment and Forestry; the Republic of South Sudan.**
- **Dr. Tabarek Mohamed, Technical Advisor to the Minister, representing H.E Ibrahim Elmi Mohamed; Minister of Agriculture, Water, Fishery and Livestock, in charge of marine resources; the Republic of Djibouti.**
- **Dr. Yohannis Girma, Adviser to the State Minister, representing Dr Fikru Regassa, the State Minister, Ministry of Agriculture of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.**
- **Mr Peter Chege, Director of Political Affairs, representing Hon. Peninah Malonza, Cabinet Secretary for EAC, ASALs and Regional Development, the Republic of Kenya.**

**Distinguished delegates of Member States,  
Distinguished delegates of Development Partners  
Ladies and Gentlemen!!**

Let me start by warmly welcoming you to the 9<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI) Platform.

I want to thank the People and the Government of the Republic of Uganda for graciously hosting this meeting in this beautiful city – Entebbe.

**Your Excellencies!**

Today, we are not only holding the annual General Assembly meeting but also marking the Tenth Anniversary of the IDDRSI Platform since the first inaugural Platform Steering Committee meeting was held in October 2013 in the Republic of Djibouti.

**Your Excellencies!**

The IGAD region remains one of the most vulnerable regions to climate change impacts due to prolonged conflicts, high population pressure, and a subsistence economic base. During the last four years, our region has been hit by a severe drought not seen in the previous forty years. As a result, our people experienced five consecutive failed cropping seasons, with rangelands turned into dust due to extreme dryness. As you are very well aware, 13.2 million livestock perished, leading to hunger and displacement of our pastoral communities with increasing resource-based conflicts across border areas. In economic terms, for example, Kenya alone lost close to 1.5 billion from the loss of nearly 3 million livestock.

Evidence from the region has also shown a significant human displacement due to drought, mainly in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya, with a total displaced population estimated at 2.7 million. With forced mobility,

children, women and the elderly face multiple risks, which often lead to loss of life and permanent health problems.

As a testimony to our collective actions towards building resilience, regional reports indicate a gradually declining trend in the number of food-insecure people in our region; from the peak of 55.5 million in 2022 to 47.3 in October 2023. While this is an encouraging trend, this huge number of people (47.3 million) in need of urgent food assistance remains a matter of grave concern, requiring the region to intensify its humanitarian response as well as increase investments in long-term resilience building.

The IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre (ICPAC) predicted, with a significant probability, the occurrence of El Nino that we are currently observing in many countries of the region. Due to structural problems in many economies, the preparation is far less than the amount of rain being received. The damages and displacement as a result of floods and the ongoing food insecurity from droughts and conflicts raise more concern about the region's level of preparedness and humanitarian response.

### **Your Excellencies!**

Cognizant of its core mandate, IGAD embarked on building the resilience of the people in the region from recurrent droughts, floods, transboundary pests and diseases, and conflicts of various magnitudes. IGAD has mobilised USD 1.7 billion during the last ten years to achieve these objectives. This resource has been used to implement various projects that brought tangible socio-economic benefits to agro-pastoral and pastoral communities in the region. Moreover, the resources were utilised for building the capacity of IGAD and Member States institutions, considering the technological advances of our time.

As we mark the Tenth Anniversary of the IDDRSI Platform, which became a unifying force for bringing together diverse stakeholders towards building resilience at individual, household, community, national and regional levels, I wish to recognise with great humility the shared vision of our leaders and development partners who took the bold decision of establishing the IDDRSI ten years ago. I wish to acknowledge with profound gratitude and appreciation all the Member States and Development Partners who have provided significant resources for implementing resilience projects in the region over the last ten years.

The IDDRSI Platform coordination structure is cascaded to the national level through a Steering Committee that guides the Country Programming Papers. Moreover, through the Regional Programming Paper, Member States implement the IGAD Cluster Approach that promotes cross-border cooperation, which is the cornerstone of the regional integration agenda of the region and beyond. These institutional architectures for regional coordination were established with the support of the AfDB during phase 1 of IDDRSI. Starting in 2018, the Swedish government took over the platform's support. Therefore, I would like to express my appreciation to the AfDB and the Government of Sweden for this dedicated support to the regional resilience coordination mechanism, which has connected us from the regional level all the way to the cluster.

### **Your Excellencies!**

One of the vital success factors to resilience building at the regional level is collective resource mobilisation to design and implement projects with a high impact in terms of geographic coverage, number of direct beneficiaries with inclusiveness and equity, and multi-year funding. With this in mind, IGAD is working with multiple Development Partners. For instance, the African Development Bank, which provided USD 300 million

during phase 1 of IDDRSI, provided USD 162 million for the programme to Build Resilience for Food and Nutrition Security in the HoA (BREFONS) that began its operation in 2022. To ensure greater impact at scale proportionate to the complex interconnected challenges facing the region, we are at an advanced stage of securing USD 151 million as supplementary funding to BREFONS through the Global Climate Fund. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to encourage the BREFONS programme countries to take advantage of this additional financing through the IGAD regional window. In the same way, I would also like to appeal to our development partners to scale up the level of resilience investment in the region to accelerate the adaptation to climate change and ensure food security.

### **Your Excellencies!**

I have been assured by my team that the 16<sup>th</sup> PSC meeting here over the last 2 days has reviewed our collective effort over the last 10 years and identified key strategic, programmatic and operational issues that the region will focus on in the next phase of IDDRSI. However, it's important for the region to remain focused on consolidating the gains made as well as targeting resources towards high-impact areas, particularly on:

1. Strengthening and institutionalising the management arrangements and systems of IDDRSI in relation to coordination, M&E, Resource Mobilization, and Data Analysis and Management
2. Intensifying large-scale resilience investments towards integrated water security, food and Nutrition Security, Feed and fodder security and Peace and Security
3. Initiating consultations with Member States and Development Partners on the future of IDDRSI post 2027/2028

Finally, I thank the Republic of Uganda for hosting the 16<sup>th</sup> IDDRSI Platform Steering Committee meeting during the last two days and the General Assembly.

I also wish to thank the Honourable Ministers and delegates of various ministries coordinating IDDRSI in the Member States and Development Partners for their active participation in the Steering Committee meetings and reports we received. I also thank my staff for their efforts in organising these meetings.

Thank you!!