
Speech on IGAD General Assembly Meeting.

The IDDRSI platform General Assembly of the IGAD Drought Resilience & Sustainability initiative (IDDRSI)

24th November, 2023

Entebbe, Uganda

**Your, Excellencies Ministers of IGAD member States,
Your, Excellency Workineh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary of IGAD,
Distinguished Delegates' and Invited guests
All protocol observed**

First of all, I feel honored by the opportunity to represent my Country Ethiopia at this very important time when our sisterly countries seek for mutual cooperation to overcome the ever curving problem of climate change and related risks. Our regional organization IGAD, with its relentless effort has achieved numerous results in pastoral and agro pastoral areas of our country and the member states as well, and I am honored to participate on such high level meeting of IGAD to deliver speech on behalf of my GOV, on this valuable meeting to my country to discuss on the issues of risks to climate change in the arid and semi-arid lowlands (ASALs) of the IGAD regions and beyond. With this respect, the Ethiopian government has profoundly recognised that drought prone communities that share the same ecosystem and same challenges, and the interconnection through shared natural resources, regional socio-cultural interactions and socioeconomic transactions for cross border trade and trans-boundary human and animal movements has a very similar problem and need almost similar solution but under its' own unique context. It was learnt that in any case such practices along neighbouring communities around the cross border areas have demanded a strong coordination, harmonization and integrated cross border development efforts in dealing with drought and related emergencies in the HOA to ultimately curves the effect of drought.

IGAD member countries share similar ecological characteristics, such as transboundary natural resources including water and pasture, whose management requires effective regional coordination.

Moreover, lack of accurate climate forecasting, the proliferation of animal diseases related to the movement of pastoralists between countries, and transboundary conflicts caused by the scarcity of natural resources (water and pasture). This scarcity is amplified by the climate change.

Given the various drivers of fragility in the Horn of Africa, including high levels of poverty, environmental degradation, weak formal and informal institutions, conflict and forced displacement,

Limited access to infrastructure, social services, and livelihoods, and hybrid, often weak, governance systems are some of the key constraints in the borderlands.

Borderland areas historically suffered from underinvestment and whose challenges and vulnerabilities cannot be tackled by national action alone so regional collaboration is essential to deal with almost common issues among the countries.

There is an urgent need to invest in the systemic resilience of the region to enhance their capacities to prepare for and respond effectively to shocks and stresses, and to achieve development goals, also the principles to deepen resilience through mobility and trade in the region is important, as the freedom of movement for people and goods is essential for intercommunity trade, livelihoods and survival. Regional collaboration is essential to deal with the problems IGAD member states.

Integration of citizen engagement within development projects in the region may help institutionalize a community-driven approach to promote participation, accountability and transparency.

Regional cooperation within a shared geographic area and other economic interactions creates opportunities for (1) trade, investment and tourism; (2) use and effective management of natural resources; (3) improved infrastructure; and (4) facilitates cross-border movement of people. In this regard, the ever-increasing competition for, and conflict over the use and management of resources in border areas, such as pasture and water, among other resources, has increased the need for cross-border and area-based development strategies and cooperation so as to bring about sustainable peace and development in Africa in general and in the IGAD region in particular.

Distinguished delegates' and invited guests,

As you all remember the 2011 Nairobi Summit urged collective action and was dedicated to the objective of ending drought emergencies, once and for all through building sustainable livelihoods in the IGAD region. The summit called for the revision of strategies, policies and programs that involve increased investments aimed at building resilience within the member states and in the region as well.

In respect to this, the IGAD Member States have made a commitment to end drought emergencies in a coordinated and harmonized manner. In 2010 the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) developed a revised Disaster Risk Management (DRM) policy, which is already in practice and whose overall objective is to reduce the risks and impacts of disasters through establishment of a comprehensive and integrated disaster risk management system within the context of sustainable development.

It is important to note that, the Ethiopian DRM Policy is linked to IGAD's Regional DRM policy and IGAD had provided financial and technical support for the preparation of Hazard Map and Atlas, and thus for the establishment of the Natural Disaster Fund.

Ethiopia has also developed a Climate-Resilient Green Economy Strategy (CRGES) outlining a green economic growth path that fosters development and sustainability. More recently, Ethiopia has made great strides in tackling climate change through the green legacy under which we have managed to plant more than 20 billion seedlings of different purpose.

More over Ethiopia has prepared a Conflict Resolution and Peace Building Strategy (CRPBS).

The main objective of this strategy is to prevent the occurrence of violent conflicts, particularly in pastoral areas through collection of Early Warning information and initiating early and timely responses, tackling root causes of conflict by aligning the interventions phase by-phase with the long term development plans. This strategy also is very well aligned with that of the IGAD CEWARN- conflict prevention and resolution frame work.

Dear Ministers,

Participants,

Ladies and Gentle Men

Currently my country Ethiopia is in the dynamics of changes to real democracy, we are in the time when human right of every citizen is equally valued and the fundamental of democratic rights of all citizens is equally respected. To this end we are in the time when the GoV need to respond to all reasonable requests from all corners of the society by whatever possible means. As you all know the pastoralist and agro pastoralists have been disadvantaged and marginalized people in the country, while currently insuring their livelihood become of paramount importance to the government. So in this very difficult time working with IGAD/IDDRSI is the priority to achieve the objective of Ending Drought Emergencies (EDE) in the country, to achieve this goal the GoE and its development partners have focused on three areas of intervention. [

- **Institutional and policy reform,**
- **acceleration of investment in the pastoral and agro-pastoral areas and**
- **managing disaster risks through dynamic and innovative approaches.**

Following the Nairobi Summit in September 2011 and subsequent meetings, the Ethiopian Government and development partners have committed themselves “to make new and significant investments in the dry-lands of the country to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable communities.

The increased investments are aimed at opening up the dry lands and the pastoral and agro-pastoral areas for economic development, market linkages, creation of employment opportunities, quick delivery of services and emergency supplies both at national and regional levels. Evidently vulnerability in this area can only be mitigated through long-term development interventions and balanced investments which are aimed at building resilience of the pastoral livelihoods.

To this end, the government has designed and implemented various resilience building projects in the dry land areas of the country, just to mention a few;

- Pastoral Community Development Program (PCDP)
- Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Project,
- Drought Resilience and Sustainable Livelihood Program (DRSLP-I & DRSLP-II)
- Regional Pastoral Livelihoods Resilience Program (RPLRP)
- Strengthening Drought Resilience SDR/GIZ,
- Strengthening Drought Resilience SDR/GIZ/ SDC
- Regional Fund for Strengthen Drought Resilience RF/SDR/KFW
- DRSLP/ IDC
- Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) are few among many other programs in that particular area.
- Building Resilience for Food and Nutrition Security (BREFONS)
- De Risking Inclusion and Value Enhancement for pastoral economy (DRIVE)

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen

Evidently, through the implementation of drought resilience Initiatives showed very encouraging results, there are still challenges and gaps that needs due attention by the Government, Development Partners (DPs) and IGAD.

In this regard, I am so confident that Government of Ethiopia has committed to achieve the Nairobi summit declaration and we will continue with the same spirit and commitment to sustain momentum of the on-going effort in building resilience. Implementation of the ongoing and upcoming resilience initiatives will be achieved through an integrated intervention of different actors that can collectively impact in building resilience of vulnerable communities in the areas of arid semi-arid lowlands of the country.

More recently, considering the national and regional dynamics, lessons learnt and the emerging issues, the GoE has revised and validated the Country

Programming Paper (CPP) through overwhelming participation of all concerned institutions. The role of our development partners in the process of implementing regional and national resilience building initiatives was and will be of paramount importance. Nonetheless, we have a long way to go in implementing the development programs in the areas identified as drought prone and vulnerable.

Cognizant of this fact, I call upon all development partners who have been engaged and who is ready to support our future struggle against poverty and drought in our region being part of the implementation program.

Once again, I would like to convey my extended appreciation and the message from the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture to all development partners and IGAD secretariat who have been with us along the way in the implementation process in the due courses of tackling our problems in that specific area to implement drought resilience initiatives to support pastoral and agro pastoral communities, which were and are highly affected by recurrent drought, that becomes a recurrent phenomenon in the area even more frequent than before. It was our current memory that my country faces a very challenging drought condition in the last year which more than 5.6 animal head dead and which still continue to be a problem in some areas of pastoral and agro pastoral Livelihoods of ASALS which some says was a very difficult situation which country faces in 40 years time, so I urge you to continue your extended support in our future development endeavour to follow the same path you paved before. .

In conclusion, I wish a fruitful IGAD platform on Drought Resilience and Sustainability Initiative General Assembly and Ministerial meeting for the successful completion and deliberations of the path to the resilience and sustainability agenda to end drought.

I thank you!