

OFFICIAL REMARKS

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IDDRSI Platform Steering Committee

Entebbe, Uganda Ethiopia

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* Your Excellency Hon Esther Anyakun, State Minister for Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, the Republic of Uganda;
* Distinguished Delegates of IGAD Member States;
* Distinguished Representatives of Development Partners;
* Ladies and Gentlemen;
* All protocols observed.
1. It is a great pleasure for me to speak today as we mark the Tenth Anniversary of the commencement of the flagship of resilience projects within the IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI) framework. The first formal Steering Committee of IDDRSI took place on 22 October 2013 in the Republic of Djibouti. Since then, we have held 16 meetings, including this meeting, to steer this important regional initiative. Therefore, on behalf of the IGAD Secretariat, I would like to thank the IGAD Member States and Development Partners who supported the regional approach to resilience for over a decade, including the preparatory years of 2011 and 2012.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Evidence in our region and elsewhere shows drought is a major driver of low crop and livestock productivity, leading to food insecurity, substantial financial losses to primary producers and increased cost of living for urban consumers. Anecdotal evidence shows that the region lost a staggering total of 13.2 million heads of animals from the recent droughts. The most affected countries are Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia. The estimate for Kenya alone is USD 1.5 billion, where close to 3 million animals died. In this connection, we need to strengthen our regional information systems to monitor our production systems, among others, effectively.
2. There is now global convergence on the irreversible negative effect of climate change on communities, institutions and economies. To that extent, the decision of our Leaders in the region and Development Partners, who took a bold measure of establishing a regional platform, the IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI), deserve great appreciation because their visionary decision has allowed us to build institutional capacity that offers opportunities of learning by doing on how to establish purposeful partnership and coordination of regional initiatives which we have now experimented with during the last ten years.
3. Since 2020, the IGAD region has been under severe drought for five consecutive seasons. As a result, people of the region and the economies have experienced food insecurity, displacement, and conflicts while recovering from the shocks of COVID-19 and Desert Locusts that ravaged the scene of the farmlands and rangelands, aggravating the already poor crop and livestock production systems. On top of that, the global peace and security environment has negatively affected the economies and their food, fertiliser and fuel supply chains.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Since the operationalisation of IDDRSI in 2013, IGAD has mobilised USD 1.7 billion to implement various resilience projects supported by International Financial institutions such as the World Bank, the African Development Bank, and the Islamic Development Bank; the European Union; USAID; and several friendly countries. These projects have been implemented in various cross-border areas commonly affected by drought and other hazards.
2. While the regional window through IGAD has provided and continues to provide additional financing opportunities for Member states to implement their resilience agendas, the investments have not been equitably distributed across the priority intervention areas of the IDDRSI framework. This has affected geographic coverage and the scope of interventions, leaving pockets of vulnerable areas and households.
3. The number of food-insecure people in our region has shown a downward trend from the peak of 55.5 million in 2022. This is a good sign and a testimony of the positive impacts of the collective efforts of Member States, Development Partners and IGAD. Based on recent regional data, about 27.2 million people in six of the eight IGAD member states were highly food insecure in October 2023. While there is no data for Eritrea, according to the 2023 Ethiopia Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), 20.1 million people were targeted for food assistance in Ethiopia, bringing the total population needing urgent food assistance to 47.3. This figure includes an estimated 35,000 people who were classified in the Catastrophe situation in South Sudan. Hence, the number of food-insecure populations remains worrisome, and we need to intensify both the humanitarian and development efforts to build the adaptive capacities of our people against factors that underpin their vulnerability to various shocks.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Resilience coordination is indispensable for achieving greater impact at the regional level. IGAD established a network of vertical and horizontal coordination mechanisms to effectively and efficiently implement IDDRSI. The coordination architecture of IDDRSI aimed at building the resilience of drought-prone communities by addressing their vulnerabilities and challenges, including food insecurity, poverty and environmental degradation. At the regional level, the regional IDDRSI Platform, comprising three institutional arrangements (the General Assembly, the Steering Committee and the Platform Coordination Unit), facilitates collaborative interactions between IGAD Member States, Development Partners and all other stakeholders. At the country level, there is an equivalent arrangement where the national IDDRSI Platform provides the essential linkage between the regional and national coordination structures connecting all sectors and stakeholders. The structure has, over time, extended to the cluster level through the IGAD Cluster Approach. The IDDRSI National Coordinators based in each country and closely working with the Ministries coordinating IDDRSI in each Member State are supported by the IDDRSI Steering Committee Representative, IDDRSI Focal Person. In addition, we have established the National Expert Panel, which provides technical support to the national steering committee of IDDRSI. These structures support all IGAD functions.
2. IGAD realised the values of monitoring and evaluation, knowledge management and resilience measurement for the regional IDDRSI Platform from its inception. As a result, IGAD established a foundation to strengthen M&E for measuring the performance of Country Programming Papers and Regional Programming Paper that guides flagship projects. This was achieved by aligning Country Programming Papers with the National Development Plans, effectively carried out by the National Experts Panel members representing various PIAs. The lessons drawn from the M&E at country and regional levels produced knowledge products disseminated using various channels. To monitor the performance of countries and the region, IGAD established the Resilience Analysis Unit in 2014, which has matured and produced an IGAD Resilience Index, the first in the continent to measure national resilience index.
3. IGAD’s pioneering efforts on the Cluster Approach targeted cross-border development in the region, where we identified eight initial clusters to bring the service of IGAD institutions closer to the people. I have witnessed the progress of these works that the Member States and Development Partners support. On top of encouraging achievements in transboundary collaboration in the Karamoja, Mandera, Dikhil, Benshangul-Blue Nile State Clusters, I recently presided over the launch of the Moyale Cluster with H.E Hon Mohamud Mohamed Ali, the Governor of County Government of Marsabit. Furthermore, the IGAD Cluster Approach served as a planning tool for the borderland interventions by Partners: The World Bank funding the Transboundary Resilience Project, the UNDP implementing the African Borderlands Center; the EU funding Peaceful and Resilient Borderlands that is implemented in three clusters and the Horn of Africa Initiative implementing a Roadmap for the Borderlands Development that will be implemented in six clusters out of eight. These multi-million Dollar budget initiatives came on board through my directives, where IGAD's various units played active roles under the coordination of the PCPD/IDDRSI PCU. In this connection, I would like to appeal to all development partners to ensure that your portfolio adequately addresses the borderlands communities. IGAD has a resilience programming framework for cross-border areas developed during the last five years through the support of development partners and active participation of the Member State institutions. These programming documents, which were developed through a participatory process, can guide projects at local levels.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

1. My brief highlights above shed light on the institutional capacity we have developed, the opportunities at hand, and the challenges we are dealing with. Now, we need to pause and rethink what we need to change in the next five to ten years by drawing lessons from the past ten years of implementing drought resilience initiatives in the region with the leadership and coordination roles of IGAD. For instance, how can we better:
* Institutionalize the coordination of IDDRSI at the national and sub-national level.
* Increase coverage of resilience investments across geography and equitable distribution across PIAs of the IDDRSI.
* Strengthen the adaptive and resilience capacities of our communities, institutions and economies.
* Strengthen Member States’ capacity in data management for evidence-based decision-making.
1. This year's IDDRSI Platform Steering Committee will follow the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 28) in the United Arab Emirates from 30 November to 12 December 2023. IGAD will join the countries of the region and the rest of the world to assess climate adaptation and mitigation agenda and related issues that directly affect our people. I will use this opportunity to engage with our strategic and new partners to mobilise more resources to deepen the resilience agenda in the region.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

1. In closing, I wish to thank the people and Government of the Republic of Uganda for hosting this 16th IDDRSI Platform Steering Committee meeting and the 9th General Assembly that will take place on 24 November; members of the IDDRSI Steering Committee and Development Partners for your active participation, including the effort that went into the preparation, and the IGAD staff for tirelessly organising these meetings.

Thank you for your kind attention!