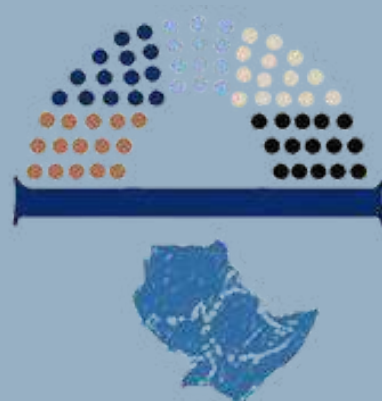


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BRIDGE Research & Innovation



BRIDGE Profile

BridgeResearch and Innovation for Democratic Governance and Enhanced Peace (BRIDGE) is an independent, non-profit think tank based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Registered under the FDRE Civil Society Organization Proclamation No. 1113/2019, which specializes in parliamentary affairs, peace, and development in the IGAD region.



Mission

To advance democratic governance and enhance peace through evidence-based research and innovative policy analysis.



Vision

To be a leading research hub and trusted source of analysis on parliamentary affairs, peace, governance, and development in the IGAD region.



Core Values

Rigor: Delivering high-quality, evidence-driven research.

Innovation: Pioneering creative and adaptive solutions for governance and peace challenges.

Trust: Upholding credibility through transparent and reliable analysis.



Objectives

It aims to be a knowledge hub on the affairs of IGAD and strengthen peace and socio-economic development throughout the Horn of Africa by:

- Conducting rigorous, evidence-based research that informs policy and practice on the IGAD subregional organization and on the Horn of Africa.
- Delivering specialized training programs on the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and regional dynamics in the Horn of Africa.
- Monitoring IGAD's activities for knowledge dissemination and engagement with academicians, the diplomatic community, and pertinent stakeholders, to amplify IGAD's impact and reinforce its commitment in the region.

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CONTENTS

Contents	1
1. Peace and Security	2
IGAD Concludes the Women, Peace, and Security Brainstorming Session	2
IGAD Urges Wider Engagement as Amhara–Afahid Peace Accord is Signed.....	3
IGAD Secretariat Reiterates Its Firm Commitment to the Federal Republic of Somalia’s Unity, Sovereignty, and Territorial Integrity.....	4
Strengthening IGAD–UN Coordination for Peace in Sudan	4
IGAD Notes the Conduct of Municipal Elections in Mogadishu as a Step Toward Democratic Governance	5
2. Climate Resilience and Natural Resources	6
Scaling up Uganda’s Experience on Fish Export and Aquaculture for a Resilient and Competitive Blue Economy	6
Shaping a Resilient Future: IGAD Deepens Collaboration with ACG	6
IGAD Ministers Adopt a Regional Plastic Pollution Prevention Strategy	6
Advancing Food Security Through Sustainable Land Management in Tadjourah	7
3. Social and Humanitarian Affairs	9
A2DSRH Programme to Develop a 2026 Workplan during their Annual Review and Planning Meeting	9
Djibouti Advances National Land Policy Through Validation Workshop	9
4. Regional Integration	11
IGAD Advances Regional Digital Integration Through Spectrum Management Strategy Validation Workshop	11
Regional Experts Meet to Strengthen Action on Disaster Risk Management and Mobility	12
IGAD Convenes Regional Experts to Validate the RASIP 2026–2035.....	13
HDMI 2nd Steering Committee Meeting	13
IGAD Regrets Eritrea’s Decision to Withdraw from the Organization	14
Steering Committee Concludes with Renewed Commitment to Strengthening Land Governance in the IGAD Region ..	15
Driving IGAD’s Collective Vision Through Strategic Budget Consultations	15
5. Organizational Affairs	17
IGAD Leadership Academy Alumni Conference	17
IGAD Bids Farewell to Ambassador Ismail Wais (PhD) and Welcomes Ambassador Moussa Djama Ali as New Special Envoy to the Republic of South Sudan.....	17
IGAD Expands Engagement with France in Preparation for the 2026 France–Africa Summit	17
IGAD and Djibouti Strengthen Strategic Partnership.....	18
Advancing the IGAD–Ethiopia Partnership	18





1. PEACE AND SECURITY

IGAD Concludes the Women, Peace, and Security Brainstorming Session



IGAD has concluded a two-day **Women, Peace and Security (WPS)**¹ brainstorming session aimed at enhancing gender mainstreaming across its peace and security interventions.² The meeting brought together programme offices within the Peace and Security Division and the IGAD Gender Unit to review progress, assess WPS indicators, and improve monitoring and evaluation practices.

Opening remarks emphasizing gender mainstreaming, stronger monitoring frameworks, and the importance of women's leadership in peacebuilding were delivered by Commander Abebe Muluneh, Director of the Peace and Security Division, and Mrs. Amina Farah, Manager of the Gender Unit, who reaffirmed IGAD's commitment to advancing gender-responsive programming.

¹ Preventing Conflict: The Origins of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. Women, Peace and Security agenda emphasizes preventing conflict by addressing root causes such as gender inequality, militarization, and the proliferation of arms. It highlights that true prevention requires both immediate action like including women in early-warning systems—and long-term structural change to build lasting peace.
<https://wps.unwomen.org/preventing/>

² IGAD Concludes The Women, Peace and Security Brainstorming Session <https://igad.int/igad-concludes-the-women-peace-and-security-brainstorming-session/>

Day one featured a refresher on the IGAD Regional Action Plan on WPS and training on monitoring and evaluation, while day two focused on group discussions to refine indicators, address reporting challenges, and strengthen collaboration between programme teams and the Gender Unit.

The session concluded with practical recommendations to improve reporting pathways, internal communication, and integration of gender perspectives into planning and implementation.³ These outcomes will guide IGAD's ongoing efforts to strengthen coordination and advance the WPS agenda across the region. The recommendations are:

Strengthening Gender Mainstreaming

A central recommendation emphasized the need to embed gender considerations across all IGAD peace and security programs. This entails the development of clear guidelines and accountability mechanisms to ensure that women's voices are not merely symbolic but substantively represented in decision-making processes. Member states were urged to harmonize their national policies with IGAD's regional WPS framework, thereby creating coherence and synergy across borders.

Enhancing Monitoring and Evaluation

The session highlighted the importance of evidence-based policymaking through robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems. A regional WPS M&E framework was proposed, incorporating measurable indicators to track progress on women's participation in peacebuilding. Improved data collection and reporting mechanisms were identified as essential to closing existing knowledge gaps and ensuring

³ IGAD Concludes The Women, Peace and Security Brainstorming Session <https://igad.int/igad-concludes-the-women-peace-and-security-brainstorming-session/>



that interventions are responsive to the realities faced by women in conflict-affected areas.

Improving Institutional Coordination

Another key recommendation focused on strengthening coordination between IGAD's Peace and Security Division and the Gender Unit. Joint programming mechanisms were encouraged to avoid duplication and enhance efficiency. Regular cross-unit reviews were proposed as a means of institutionalizing collaboration and ensuring that WPS principles are consistently applied across IGAD's diverse initiatives.

Capacity Building and Awareness

The session underscored the need for sustained investment in capacity building. Training programs for IGAD staff and member states were recommended to deepen understanding of WPS principles. Furthermore, civil society organizations and women's groups were identified as critical partners in operationalizing the agenda. Awareness campaigns were proposed to challenge stereotypes and highlight the transformative role of women in peace and security.

Resource Mobilization

Recognizing the financial constraints that often hinder WPS programming, participants recommended the allocation of dedicated funding within IGAD's budget. Donor partnerships were encouraged to sustain long-term initiatives, while innovative financing mechanisms were suggested to support women-led peacebuilding projects. This reflects a broader recognition that financial sustainability is essential for meaningful implementation.

Regional and National Integration

Finally, the recommendations emphasized the importance of integrating WPS principles at both regional and national levels. Cross-border collaboration was identified as particularly

important in addressing shared challenges such as displacement and transnational conflict. Member states were encouraged to adopt national action plans aligned with IGAD's WPS strategy, while regional dialogues were proposed to facilitate knowledge exchange and the dissemination of best practices.



IGAD Urges Wider Engagement as Amhara-Afahid Peace Accord is Signed



In Addis Ababa, IGAD Deputy Executive Secretary H.E. Mohamed Abdi Ware, representing the Executive Secretary, alongside African Union Commission Deputy Chairperson H.E. Haddadi, witnessed the signing of a peace agreement between the Amhara Regional Government of Ethiopia and the Amhara Fano People's Organization (Afahid).⁴ The accord was formally signed by H.E. Arega Kebede, President of the Amhara Regional Government, and Captain Masresha Sete on behalf of Afahid. IGAD commends the parties for this bold step toward peace and calls on remaining groups to embrace this historic process.



⁴ IGAD Calls for Broader Participation as Amhara-Afahid Parties Sign Peace Deal <https://web.facebook.com/share/p/17JK8FkfEB/>



IGAD Secretariat Reiterates Its Firm Commitment to the Federal Republic of Somalia's Unity, Sovereignty, and Territorial Integrity



IGAD has reiterated its firm commitment to the unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Somalia following recent announcements regarding Somaliland's recognition by Israel.⁶ IGAD emphasized that Somalia remains a sovereign Member State fully recognized under international law, and warned that unilateral recognition contravenes the UN Charter, the African Union Constitutive Act, and the IGAD Agreement. Under the Agreement for the Establishment of IGAD, on Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity

*"Respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Member States shall be upheld."*⁷

The Secretariat urged international partners to uphold international law and support dialogue that strengthens peace, stability, and cooperation in the Horn of Africa. IGAD also reaffirmed its solidarity with Somalia's government and people, pledging continued support for inclusive political processes and regional cooperation to advance lasting peace and prosperity.



Strengthening IGAD–UN Coordination for Peace in Sudan



At the IGAD Office in Addis Ababa today, H.E. Executive Secretary Dr. Workneh met with H.E. Ramtane Lamamra, the UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Sudan. Their discussions focused on reinforcing the IGAD–UN partnership to advance coordinated, practical measures that deliver meaningful results for the people of Sudan.⁸

The meeting highlighted the urgency of aligning regional and international efforts to support dialogue, humanitarian access, and inclusive peacebuilding initiatives. Both leaders emphasized the importance of sustained collaboration to address the complex challenges facing Sudan and reaffirmed their commitment to working together

⁵ Source: <https://www.nationsonline.org/one-world/map/somalia-political-map.htm>

⁶ IGAD Secretariat Reiterates Its Firm Commitment to the Federal Republic of Somalia's Unity, Sovereignty, and Territorial Integrity <https://igad.int/igad-secretariat-reiterates-its-firm-commitment-to-the-federal-republic-of-somalias-unity-sovereignty-and-territorial-integrity>

⁷ Agreement Establishing the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) [Agreement Establishing the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development \(IGAD\)](https://www.igad.int/igad-secretariat-reiterates-its-firm-commitment-to-the-federal-republic-of-somalias-unity-sovereignty-and-territorial-integrity)

⁸ Strengthening IGAD–UN Coordination for Peace in Sudan <https://web.facebook.com/share/p/1PQgRbao3C/>



toward stability, resilience, and lasting peace in the country.



IGAD Notes the Conduct of Municipal Elections in Mogadishu as a Step Toward Democratic Governance

IGAD has praised the orderly conduct of municipal elections in Mogadishu, noting improved security conditions that enabled their successful organization.⁹ IGAD highlighted the polls as an important first step toward direct representation by the Somali people and the broader advancement of democratic governance. The Secretariat urged all political stakeholders to pursue inclusive dialogue and compromise to strengthen institutions, foster peace, and ensure lasting stability across Somalia.



⁹ IGAD Notes the Conduct of Municipal Elections in Mogadishu as a Step Toward Democratic Governance [IGAD Notes the Conduct of Municipal Elections in Mogadishu as a Step Toward Democratic Governance - IGAD](#)





2. CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Scaling up Uganda's Experience on Fish Export and Aquaculture for a Resilient and Competitive Blue Economy

Uganda's growing fisheries and aquaculture sector was spotlighted during a four-day technical mission by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).¹⁰ Led by Dr. Eshete Dejen, the delegation met government officials, exporters, and private operators to document best practices and strengthen regional collaboration in building a resilient Blue Economy.



Officials at the Ministry of Agriculture emphasized aquaculture's role in meeting rising demand for affordable protein as Uganda's population heads toward 100 million by 2050. Industry visits included Lake Bounty Group, a leading exporter of Nile Perch fillet to the EU, and Chemiphar Laboratory, which ensures compliance with international food safety standards. Uganda's robust quality assurance system now generates an estimated USD 100–150 million annually. Field engagements highlighted cage farming on Lake Victoria, which produces over 99 percent of national aquaculture output, and private-sector

¹⁰ Scaling up Uganda's Experience on Fish Export and Aquaculture for a Resilient and Competitive Blue Economy <https://igad.int/scaling-up-ugandas-experience-on-fish-export-and-aquaculture-for-a-resilient-and-competitive-blue-economy/>

innovation in tilapia production at Victoria Treasures Limited.

IGAD will use Uganda's experience to inform regional policy briefs and case studies, aiming to scale sustainable aquaculture, enhance food safety, and promote private-sector participation across the region's Blue Economy.



Shaping a Resilient Future: IGAD Deepens Collaboration with ACG

IGAD, represented by Deputy Executive Secretary H.E. Mawareso, joined the 94th Heads of Operations Meeting of the Arab Coordination Group (ACG) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.¹¹



The session, hosted by AGFUND and guided by the leadership of SFD, BADEA, and the UN Resident Coordinator, focused on advancing joint efforts to tackle drought, mitigate climate challenges, and boost resilience across IGAD Member States. This collaboration builds on the commitments made during the IGAD Ministers of Agriculture Summit and Communique earlier this year in Addis Ababa.



IGAD Ministers Adopt a Regional Plastic Pollution Prevention Strategy

In Djibouti, IGAD convened a Ministerial Meeting to adopt the Plastic Pollution Prevention Strategy (2026–2035), a regional framework that advances

¹¹ Building the Future Together: IGAD Steps Up Collaboration with ACG <https://web.facebook.com/share/p/1HMpr5kHWe/>



circular-economy principles and source-to-sea approaches to tackle plastic waste across the Horn of Africa.¹² Key Principles of the IGAD Strategy (2026–2035)

- * **Circular Economy Vision**
Transitioning from linear “produce–consume–discard” systems to circular models that prioritize reuse, recycling, and resource efficiency.
- * **Pollution-Free & Climate-Resilient Region**
Aligning plastic reduction with climate adaptation goals to safeguard ecosystems and communities.
- * **Shared Responsibility**
Encouraging collaboration among governments, the private sector, civil society, and communities to tackle plastic waste collectively.
- * **Equity & Inclusivity**
Ensuring vulnerable groups, including informal waste collectors and women, benefit from new opportunities in recycling and green jobs.
- * **Science-Based & Evidence-Driven**
Policies and actions guided by data, monitoring, and regional research to track progress and impacts.



Following two days of expert discussions, the meeting seeks to establish a unified regional plan to combat plastic pollution, enhance waste management systems, and promote sustainable practices among Member States. IGAD extends its appreciation to the Government of Djibouti, the

¹² IGAD Ministers Adopt a Regional Plastic Pollution Prevention Strategy <https://web.facebook.com/share/p/1CFNcvBpfH/>

Government of Sweden (Sida), and all partners for their steadfast support.¹³



Advancing Food Security Through Sustainable Land Management in Tadjourah

Local communities in Tadjourah are showcasing the impact of community-driven initiatives in building resilience and securing sustainable livelihoods.¹⁴ With guidance from the IGAD Land Governance Programme and support from the African Development Bank, pastoral households have embraced climate-smart fodder production, leading to improved land use, healthier livestock, and stronger food security. The active involvement of women has further enhanced economic independence and overall community well-being.



Building on earlier successes in Dafaynatou, Sagallou, and Kallaf, benefiting nearly one hundred households. The program has now extended to Guirori, where fodder production remains vital for income and nutrition. However, challenges persist, particularly for women, who face limited access to

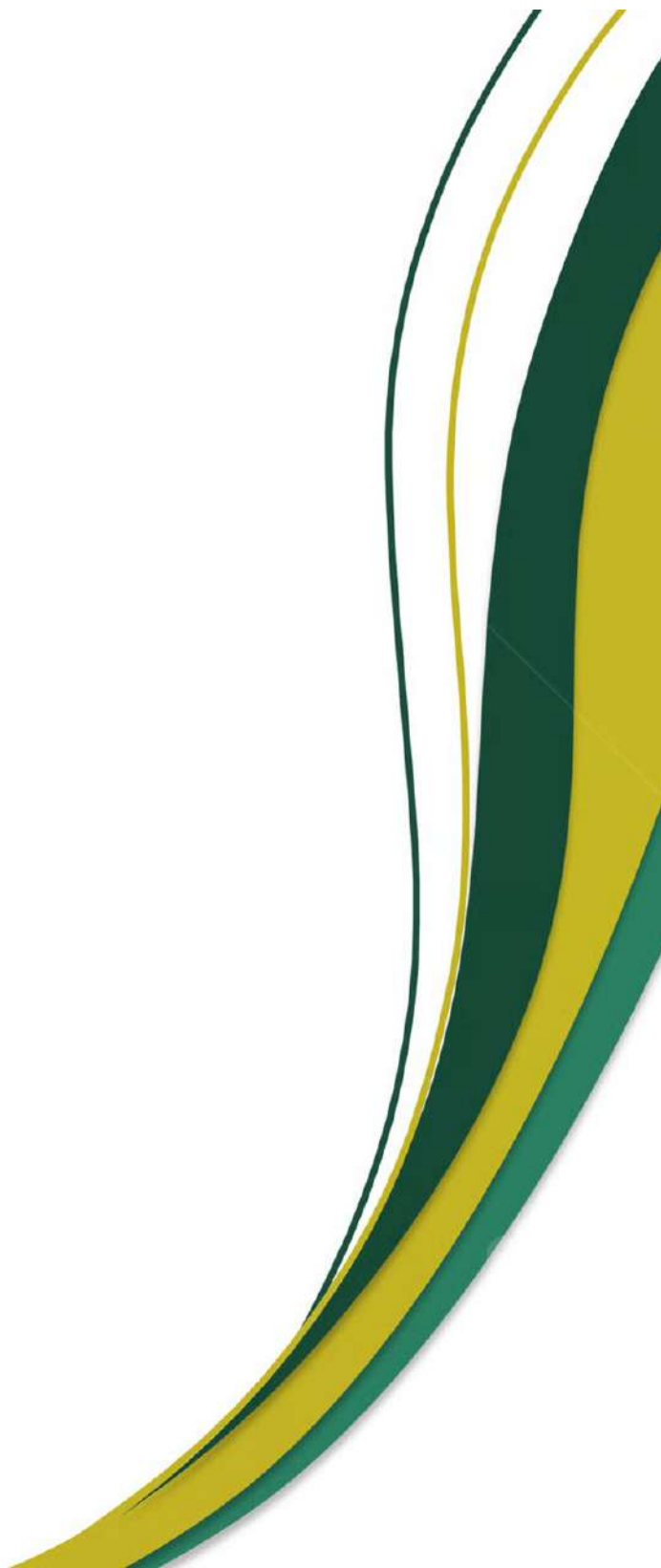
¹³ IGAD Member States Adopt a Regional Framework to Prevent Plastic Pollution through Circular Economy Approach and Strengthening Waste Management Systems <https://web.facebook.com/share/p/1GGViGLeNg/>

¹⁴ Promoting food and nutrition security through sustainable land management practice <https://web.facebook.com/share/p/1GGViGLeNg/>



quality seeds, suitable tools, and training in sustainable land management.

IGAD remains committed to closing these gaps by equipping communities with the knowledge and resources to strengthen their resilience. Together, we are shaping a sustainable, inclusive, and climate-resilient model of livelihoods that can inspire broader transformation across the region.





3. SOCIAL AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

A2DSRH Programme to Develop a 2026 Workplan during their Annual Review and Planning Meeting



On December 9, IGAD, through its Africa Demographic Dividend and Sexual and Reproductive Health (A2DSRH) Programme, launched its Annual Review and Planning Meeting to assess achievements and challenges from 2025. and chart a comprehensive work plan for 2026.¹⁵

The three-day meeting aims to strengthen regional coordination, improve domestic health financing, and promote knowledge exchange among Member States. Opening the session, IGAD Director of Health and Social Development, Ambassador Moussa Meigague praised AUDA-NEPAD's support and Member States' commitment to advancing youth health and empowerment. He emphasized the need for inclusive, resilient systems to ensure young people have access to quality sexual and reproductive health services, education, and economic opportunities. Representing the host country, Mr. Mohamed Ali Mohamed, Secretary General of Djibouti's Ministry of Health, highlighted progress in family planning, maternal health, and sexuality education, while noting persistent challenges such as rural-urban disparities, unmet

¹⁵ A2DSRH Programme to Develop a 2026 Workplan during their Annual Review and Planning Meeting <https://igad.int/a2dsrh-programme-to-develop-a-2026-workplan-during-their-annual-review-and-planning-meeting/>

demand for adolescent services, and limited medical personnel. He urged stronger collaboration to align national plans with regional objectives. The meeting, attended by SRH directors, national focal points, and programme staff, will produce a 2026 workplan to advance IGAD's vision of harnessing the demographic dividend through improved sexual and reproductive health and youth empowerment.



Djibouti Advances National Land Policy Through Validation Workshop

In Tadjourah, senior government officials, land experts, and technical partners gathered to review and endorse the final draft of Djibouti's National Land Policy. ¹⁶Organized by the Direction Générale des Domaines et de la Conservation Foncière (DGDCF) with support from IGAD, the workshop represents a significant step toward strengthening land governance, securing tenure, improving spatial planning, and ensuring transparent and efficient land administration nationwide.¹⁷



Speaking on behalf of the Director of Agriculture and Environment, Mr. Daher Elmi, Ms. Joselyn Bigirwa emphasized: *"This National Land Policy is a vital milestone in building fair, transparent, and conflict-sensitive land governance systems that*

¹⁶ Terms of Reference for a Consultancy firm to Undertake The Development of the National Land Policy (NIP) for Djibouti https://igad.int/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Terms-of-Reference-for-the-djibouti-national-land-policy_-may-2024-english-version.pdf

¹⁷ Launch of the Validation Workshop for Djibouti's National Land Policy <https://web.facebook.com/share/p/1FxP1i4GYQ/>



protect the rights of all land users, particularly women, youth, and vulnerable groups.”

Over the course of two days, participants will review findings, refine strategic policy directions, and reinforce a collective commitment to inclusive and coordinated implementation. This initiative, supported by the Swedish Government through its Embassy in Ethiopia, aims to establish a modern land governance framework aligned with Djibouti's national development priorities and serving communities across the country.





4. REGIONAL INTEGRATION

IGAD Advances Regional Digital Integration Through Spectrum Management Strategy Validation Workshop



In the second week of December, IGAD partnered with the World Bank through the Eastern Africa Regional Digital Integration Project (EARDIP) and convened a four-day Regional Spectrum Management Strategy Validation Workshop in Addis Ababa.¹⁸ The event brought together regulators, policymakers, ICT experts, and technical partners from across Member States to advance a harmonized approach to spectrum governance, seen as vital for the region's digital integration agenda.

Opening the workshop on behalf of IGAD Executive Secretary H.E. Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, the IGAD Head of Mission to Ethiopia stressed that “spectrum is the lifeblood of modern connectivity,” underscoring its role in enabling broadband, satellite services, emergency communications, and digital innovation.

Participants reviewed and validated the Draft IGAD Regional Spectrum Management Strategy, Action Plan, and Monitoring & Evaluation Framework,

facilitated by experts from the Telecommunications Management Group. The sessions also included capacity-building on ITU frameworks, frequency coordination, interference analysis, and hands-on training with spectrum management software tools.

By the close of the workshop, Member States endorsed recommendations to operationalize the strategy, reaffirming IGAD's commitment to strengthening institutional capacity and fostering a harmonized regulatory environment. The initiative supports broadband expansion, 5G readiness, and digital trade, marking a milestone in IGAD's broader Regional Integration Strategy for a more connected and competitive Eastern Africa.

The IGAD Spectrum Management Strategy Validation Workshop advanced a set of recommendations aimed at fostering regional digital integration through effective spectrum governance.¹⁹

1. Harmonization of Spectrum Policies

The workshop underscored the need to develop a unified regional framework for spectrum allocation and licensing. This includes alignment with International Telecommunication Union (ITU) standards and the promotion of cross-border frequency coordination to minimize interference and enhance efficiency.

2. Strengthening Regulatory Capacity

Participants emphasized the importance of building institutional and technical capacity among national regulators. Recommendations included the establishment of regional knowledge-sharing platforms and the adoption of data-driven spectrum management tools to improve monitoring and enforcement.

¹⁸ IGAD Advances Regional Digital Integration Through Spectrum Management Strategy Validation Workshop <https://igad.intl>IGAD Advances Regional Digital Integration Through Spectrum Management Strategy Validation Workshop

¹⁹ IGAD Advances Regional Digital Integration Through Spectrum Management Strategy Validation Workshop [IGAD Advances Regional Digital Integration Through Spectrum Management Strategy Validation Workshop - IGAD](https://igad.intl)



3. Infrastructure and Investment

The workshop called for the mobilization of public-private partnerships to expand broadband and mobile coverage. Priority was placed on investment in rural and underserved areas, alongside regional infrastructure projects such as fiber-optic backbones and satellite connectivity.

4. Inclusive Governance and Collaboration

Recommendations highlighted the necessity of multi-stakeholder participation, including governments, private sector actors, and civil society. Transparent licensing processes and strengthened coordination among IGAD member states were identified as critical to ensuring equitable access and sustainable digital integration.

5. Alignment with Regional and Global Agendas

Finally, the workshop recommended integrating the spectrum strategy into IGAD's broader Digital Integration Agenda and the African Union's Digital Transformation Strategy. This alignment is expected to support regional digital trade, innovation ecosystems, and enhanced cybersecurity frameworks.

experts from Member States to strengthen capacity in addressing climate-related mobility challenges.²⁰

The meeting, held from December 16–18 in Machakos, focused on linking disaster risk management, climate change, and human mobility. Delegates shared national progress on integrating disaster risk reduction with mobility priorities, while identifying policy, capacity, and coordination gaps that hinder effective implementation.

Speaking on behalf of IGAD Executive Secretary Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, IGAD Head of Mission to Kenya Dr. Fatuma Adan stressed that building Member States' capacity to manage climate-driven mobility risks is vital for protecting livelihoods and resilience. She noted that disasters are undermining health, agriculture, peace, and stability across the region. Kenya's National Disaster Management Unit representative, Dr. William Sifuna, highlighted recurrent droughts, floods, landslides, heatwaves, and coastal storm surges as key hazards driving displacement and cross-border movements, trends expected to intensify with climate change. Experts recommended strengthening data systems through harmonized concepts and digital platforms, enhancing early warning and anticipatory action, and expanding technical working groups to include climate-induced mobility. The workshop reaffirmed IGAD's commitment to building robust regional systems for preparedness, response, and resilience in the face of climate-related disasters.

Regional Experts Meet to Strengthen Action on Disaster Risk Management and Mobility



IGAD has concluded a three-day regional workshop under its Human Mobility in the Context of Disaster and Climate Change (MoDiaC) initiative, bringing together disaster risk management and migration

²⁰ Regional Experts Meet to Strengthen Action on Disaster Risk Management and Mobility <https://igad.int/regional-experts-meet-to-strengthen-action-on-disaster-risk-management-and-mobility/>



IGAD Convenes Regional Experts to Validate the RASIP 2026–2035



IGAD is convening regional experts to validate the IGAD Regional Agrifood Systems Investment Plan (RASIP) 2026–2035.²¹ The meeting brings together specialists from Member States, regional institutions, and partners to review priorities, investment pathways, and implementation frameworks.²²

The discussions aim to align RASIP with national strategies, climate resilience commitments, and regional integration goals. Once endorsed, the plan will serve as a coordinated investment roadmap to drive sustainable food systems transformation, strengthen livelihoods, and boost resilience to shocks across the IGAD region.



HDMI 2nd Steering Committee Meeting

IGAD has concluded the 2nd Steering Committee Meeting of the Horn of Africa Digital Market Integration (HDMI) Project, bringing together

²¹ The IGAD Regional Agrifood Systems Investment Plan (RASIP) 2026–2035 is a strategic framework designed to strengthen food systems resilience across the Horn of Africa. It builds on previous regional agricultural investment plans and aligns with continental initiatives such as the AU's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). RASIP emphasizes climate-smart agriculture, cross-border trade, and inclusive financing to address recurring food insecurity and promote sustainable growth.

²² IGAD Convenes Regional Experts to Validate the RASIP 2026–2035 <https://web.facebook.com/share/p/1856weSQYo/>

Member States, senior officials, and partners to accelerate regional digital integration.²³



Opening the session, Dr. Mohy Tohami, IGAD Director of Economic Cooperation & Regional Integration, underscored the HDMI Project as a strategic investment to unlock digital trade, strengthen trust in digital systems, and advance regional integration in line with AfCFTA.

The meeting reviewed progress from HDMI Phase I in 2025, approved the 2026 workplan, budget, procurement, and monitoring framework, and featured immersion visits showcasing Ethiopia's digital transformation. Participants also adopted recommendations to harmonise cross-border digital policies and strengthen coordination.

IGAD reaffirmed its role as a regional anchor for a secure, inclusive, and integrated digital market, positioning digital transformation as a driver of trade facilitation, competitiveness, and sustainable growth across the Horn of Africa.

The HDMI Project Phase I, is a multinational intervention based under the Economic Cooperation and Regional Integration Division (ECRID) of the Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The project interventions are implemented in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan, executed by the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) under ECRID, located in Djibouti.

²³ HDMI 2nd Steering Committee Meeting <https://web.facebook.com/share/p/1ABTpmS8pc/>



The objective of the first phase of the HDMI project is to strengthen economic integration in the Horn of Africa (HoA) region by unlocking market opportunities and thereby advancing the creation of a single digital market. With the ratification of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), complemented by the IGAD's Vision 2050 and the recently validated IGAD strategy 2026-2030, the possibility of new markets will open new avenues for businesses and new jobs, especially for youth and women.

Thus, the use of digital solutions will support the implementation of the AfCFTA, which is a key policy instrument available to the African economies. Specifically, the project seeks to implement robust, secure, and reliable digital trade and e-commerce enablers, promote digital economy and trust substrates, and fill gaps with regard to the digital ecosystem (cybersecurity, data protection



IGAD Regrets Eritrea's Decision to Withdraw from the Organization



On December 12, 2025, IGAD announced that the Government of Eritrea had formally communicated its decision to withdraw from the organization through a Note Verbale. This marks a significant setback in regional cooperation, especially after Eritrea rejoined IGAD in June 2023 following nearly two decades of self-suspension.²⁴ At that time, Eritrea was warmly welcomed back by all member states, signaling renewed solidarity and inclusivity in the region.

²⁴Eritrea has withdrawn its Membership from IGAD <https://shabait.com/2025/12/12/press-release-eritrea-has-withdrawn-its-membership-from-igad/>

Despite its formal membership, IGAD noted that Eritrea had not actively participated in meetings, programs, or activities since rejoining.²⁵ The Secretariat emphasized that it had exercised patience and goodwill, keeping the door open for dialogue and reform proposals. Eritrea's decision to withdraw, however, came without prior engagement and consultation, which IGAD described as a missed opportunity for constructive collaboration.

IGAD reaffirmed its commitment to inclusivity and regional cooperation, stressing that its consultative mechanisms remain open to Eritrea should it choose to return. The organization highlighted the importance of collective action to address shared challenges, such as conflict prevention, climate resilience, and economic integration.

Eritrea's departure raises concern about the future of regional unity and integration in the Horn of Africa. IGAD plays a vital role in promoting peace, security, and sustainable development among its member states, and Eritrea's absence could weaken efforts to tackle pressing regional issues.

In its statement, IGAD pledged to continue outreach to Eritrea, urging the government to reconsider its position and rejoin the bloc in good faith. "The door remains open,"²⁶ the Secretariat emphasized, underscoring the organization's vision of a united and cooperative Horn of Africa.



²⁵ IGAD Regrets Eritrea's Decision to Withdraw from the Organization <https://igad.int/igad-regrets-eritreas-decision-to-withdraw-from-the-organisation/>

²⁶ IGAD Regrets Eritrea's Decision to Withdraw from the Organisation <https://igad.int/igad-regrets-eritreas-decision-to-withdraw-from-the-organisation/>



Steering Committee Concludes with Renewed Commitment to Strengthening Land Governance in the IGAD Region



IGAD closed its 15th Steering Committee Meeting of the Land Governance Programme in Nairobi, bringing together Member States, experts, and development partners to review progress and refine priorities for strengthening land governance across the region.²⁷ The meeting highlighted the importance of equitable, climate-resilient, and conflict-sensitive land systems that respond to the needs of women, youth, and communities.

During the opening session, representatives from Djibouti, Kenya, and IGAD emphasized that secure land tenure and property rights are essential for human rights, poverty reduction, peacebuilding, food security, and sustainable development. Delegates praised the dedication of Member States and national land institutions, while acknowledging the critical support of partners such as the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the Embassy of Sweden in Ethiopia, GIZ, and the African Development Bank.

The two-day meeting concluded with Member States endorsing priority actions to advance secure tenure, sustainable land management, and gender-responsive governance systems. IGAD reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Member States in translating these priorities into tangible progress,

underscoring the role of regional cooperation and knowledge exchange in building peace, stability, and shared prosperity across the Horn of Africa.



Driving IGAD's Collective Vision Through Strategic Budget Consultations

In Djibouti today, IGAD convened Member States and development partners to examine the proposed 2026 budget along with projections for 2027–2028, an important step toward strengthening transparency, accountability, and long-term planning.²⁸

Guided by the recommendations of the 43rd Committee of Ambassadors, the Secretariat has steered an inclusive process involving divisions, specialized institutions, and national experts to refine priorities and performance benchmarks. The meeting now seeks the Committee's approval, positioning IGAD to enter 2026 with a unified and well-structured financial framework that embodies the region's shared vision for resilience and effective action.



The Strategic Budget Consultations serve not merely as a technical exercise in resource allocation, but as a deliberate effort to align financial commitments with the organization's long-term priorities and normative frameworks.

²⁷ Steering Committee Concludes with Renewed Commitment to Strengthening Land Governance in the IGAD Region
<https://web.facebook.com/share/p/1DtnVniBGr/>

²⁸ Advancing IGAD's Shared Vision Through Strategic Budget Dialogue
<https://web.facebook.com/share/p/1FdLx16rjZ/>



At the core of these consultations is the principle of collective ownership, whereby member states and development partners engage in dialogue to ensure that budgetary decisions reflect shared priorities. This participatory approach enhances transparency and accountability, while simultaneously reinforcing the legitimacy of IGAD's institutional processes. By linking financial planning to broader frameworks such as IGAD's Vision 2050 and the African Union's Agenda 2063, the consultations situate regional resource mobilization within continental and global development agendas.

The budget itself encompasses a wide range of thematic areas. Significant allocations are directed toward peace and security programs, including mediation, conflict prevention, and peacebuilding initiatives in fragile contexts such as Sudan, Somalia, and South Sudan. Parallel investments are made in humanitarian and resilience programming, particularly in response to recurrent droughts, floods, and food insecurity. In addition, the budget supports regional integration projects, including cross-border trade facilitation, infrastructure development, and digital integration strategies such as spectrum management. The consultations also prioritize agrifood systems transformation, notably through the Regional Agrifood Systems Investment Plan (RASIP 2026–2035), which emphasizes climate-smart agriculture and food security. Finally, resources are allocated to institutional strengthening, ensuring that IGAD's technical divisions and governance structures possess the capacity to deliver on their mandates.



5. ORGANIZATIONAL AFFAIRS

IGAD Leadership Academy Alumni Conference

The IGAD Leadership Academy Alumni Conference was honored by the presence of former Kenyan President H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta and IGAD Executive Secretary H.E. Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu. Their participation highlighted a shared commitment to youth leadership as a driver of Africa's growth, stability, and regional integration.²⁹ The gathering brought together alumni from across the IGAD region to officially launch the IGAD Leadership Alumni Network,³⁰ marking a significant step in nurturing the next generation of leaders shaping the region's future.



IGAD Bids Farewell to Ambassador Ismail Wais (PhD) and Welcomes Ambassador Moussa Djama Ali as New Special Envoy to the Republic of South Sudan

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has bid farewell to Ambassador Ismail Wais, who served as Special Envoy for South Sudan since 2017.³¹ At a reception presided over by IGAD Executive Secretary Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, Ambassador Wais was commended for his leadership in guiding the IGAD-led High Level Revitalization Forum to the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the

²⁹IGAD Leadership Academy Alumni Conference <https://igad.int/opening-statement-h-e-workneh-gebeyehu-igad-executive-secretary-igad-leadership-academy-alumni-conference/>

³⁰ IGAD alumni projects are initiatives led by graduates of the IGAD Leadership Academy (ILA) that focus on peacebuilding, youth leadership, regional integration, and community development across the Horn of Africa. They provide platforms for alumni to collaborate, mentor, and implement grassroots and policy-level projects that advance IGAD's mandate

³¹ IGAD Bids Farewell to Ambassador Ismail Wais (PhD) and Welcomes Ambassador Moussa Djama Ali as New Special Envoy to the Republic of South Sudan <https://igad.int/igad-bids-farewell-to-ambassador-ismail-wais-phd-and-welcomes-ambassador-moussa-djama-ali-as-new-special-envoy-to-the-republic-of-south-sudan/>

Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) and for advancing its implementation.



In his remarks, Ambassador Wais expressed gratitude to IGAD and Member States for their trust and solidarity throughout the peace process. The event also welcomed Ambassador Moussa Djama Ali as the new Special Envoy, tasked with deepening political engagement, strengthening coordination with stakeholders, and consolidating partnerships to support peace in South Sudan.



Dr. Workneh reaffirmed IGAD's commitment to continuity and regional engagement, emphasizing that Ambassador Ali's experience will help sustain momentum in South Sudan's peacebuilding journey. IGAD pledged to continue prioritizing dialogue, consensus-building, and cooperation as the foundation for durable peace in the country.



IGAD Expands Engagement with France in Preparation for the 2026 France–Africa Summit

In Djibouti today, IGAD Executive Secretary H.E. welcomed H.E. Jérôme Bresson, Ambassador of,



during a courtesy call.³² The meeting served as a platform to discuss ways to further strengthen the IGAD-France partnership, focusing on deeper collaboration in regional governance, integration, and broader cooperation across the IGAD region. IGAD expressed its commitment to continued collaboration with France as momentum builds toward the 2026 France–Africa Summit.



IGAD and Djibouti Strengthen Strategic Partnership

IGAD Executive Secretary H.E. Workneh Gebeyehu held talks with H.E. Abdoukader H. Omar, Djibouti's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chair of the IGAD Council of Ministers.³³



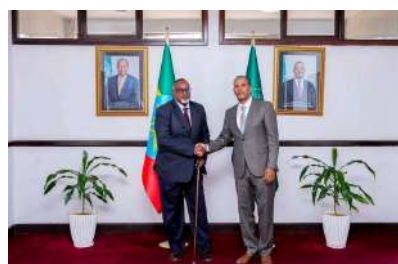
The meeting underscored Djibouti's central role in promoting IGAD's regional priorities and deepening collaboration with the Secretariat. The Executive Secretary commended Djibouti's steadfast leadership and vital support in advancing IGAD's

mission to foster stability, regional integration, and sustainable development.



Advancing the IGAD–Ethiopia Partnership

In Addis Ababa, IGAD Deputy Executive Secretary H.E. Mohamed Abdi Ware met with Ethiopia's State Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Berhanu Tsegaye, to discuss strengthening institutional collaboration and advancing shared regional priorities.³⁴ The meeting underscored Ethiopia's pivotal role as a founding Member State and highlighted the importance of aligning national and regional strategies to address pressing challenges across the Horn of Africa.



Discussions focused on enhancing cooperation in peace and security, economic integration, climate resilience, and humanitarian response, reflecting IGAD's commitment to building a stronger and more united region. Both sides reaffirmed their dedication to deepening collaboration, ensuring that IGAD's initiatives are responsive to the needs of Member States and contribute to long-term stability and prosperity.

IGAD remains steadfast in its mission to work hand-in-hand with Ethiopia and all Member States in pursuit of peace, resilience, and regional integration that benefits communities across the region

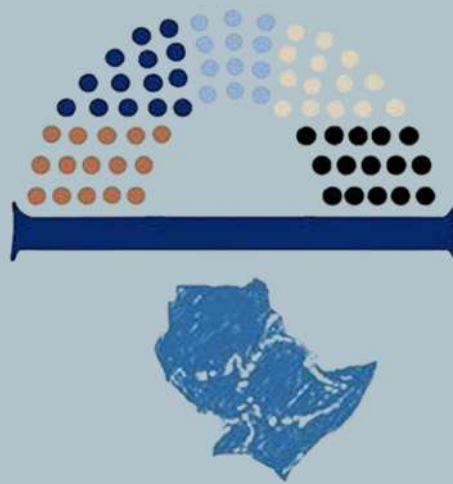


³² IGAD Strengthens Dialogue with France Ahead of the 2026 France–Africa Summit
<https://web.facebook.com/share/p/1DfYTizp8a/>

³³ IGAD and Djibouti Reinforce Strategic Cooperation
<https://web.facebook.com/share/p/1CpyPTeU7D/>

³⁴ Advancing the IGAD–Ethiopia Partnership
<https://web.facebook.com/share/p/164nczTaal/>

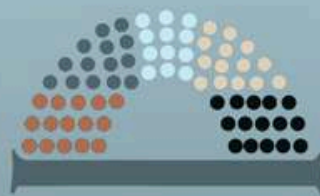




IGAD MONTHLY DIGEST

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IGAD MONTHLY DIGEST

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