



# **STATEMENT**

**BY**

**HIS EXCELLENCY HON. UHURU KENYATTA,  
C.G.H.,**

**PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE  
FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

**DURING THE OCCASION OF COMMEMORATING THE 50<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN  
UNITY/AFRICAN UNION**

***MILLENNIUM HALL ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, 25TH MAY, 2013***

**Excellency Ato Hailemariam Dessalegn, Chairperson of the Union and current Chair of IGAD,  
Dr. Nkozasana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union,  
Excellencies Heads of State and Government here present,  
Mr. Ban Ki-moon Secretary General, United Nations,  
All Special Guests invited to this 50th Anniversary of the Union  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

As I take the floor on this historic occasion of the 50th anniversary of our great Union, allow me to thank the Chairperson for this opportunity to share reflections on the theme marking the commemoration of the jubilee of Africa's unity, on behalf of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a regional organization that is alive to our obligation as a critical building bloc towards promoting African integration and strengthening our unity.

### **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

As IGAD joins in celebrating the golden jubilee, I wish to pay tribute to the founding fathers of this great continent, such as Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Salessie and Kenya's first President Jomo Kenyatta, among others.

In their wisdom, these great statesmen and Pan-Africanists promoted African solidarity to achieve the total liberation of our continent and aspired for Africa's integration as a means to spur growth and prosperity of our peoples and nations, and as a guarantee to build a strong voice in the international arena.

While we acknowledge the progress we have made so far, I strongly believe that history beckons us to seize the opportunity that destiny offers today, in order to fulfill the dreams of our forefathers. It is in this regard that I wish to share the story of the IGAD region, commonly referred to as the Horn of Africa.

Ours in the IGAD region is a story of "Renewal", driven by a spirit of self-determination, marked by a strong desire and drive to overcome adversities and claim our future. It is a story of efforts seeking to enhance state formation, achieve the self-determination of our

peoples, pursue peace and stability and deepen democratic governance as a basis for growing our shared prosperity. It is a story forged by our common experiences and grounded on a long history of solidarity.

### **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On 25th May 1963, my own country, seven days shy of self-rule, was witness to the birth of the OAU, and in December of the same year, became independent joining Sudan, Somalia and Uganda. In 1977, Djibouti became independent paving the way for the creation of our regional organization.

Ethiopia, the only country not colonized in the region, embodied the spirit Pan-Africanism, lending enormous support to the liberation struggles of Africa. In the region, it demonstrated its solidarity through material, diplomatic and moral support to our liberation struggles.

Continently, it also championed the creation of our premier institution, the OAU.

In our post-independence era, our region struggled with nation building, experienced generalized instability and conflicts, agitation for self-determination and demands for deeper democratization.

Unfortunately, in some cases, the combination of these realities led to protracted conflicts that led to huge human tragedies and trauma, greatly impeding our aspirations for development.

The region, which is ecologically fragile was also subject to the vulgarities of nature, experiencing intermittent droughts, famine and other natural disasters linked to climate change.

As a result, resource-based conflicts, sometimes between communities across borders, became a feature of the region. In all cases, all of our countries carried the burdens of the unintended consequences of these challenges.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In dealing with this cocktail of challenges, the IGAD region pulled together, demonstrating the value of solidarity and collective action,

and reaffirming the reality of our interdependence. These values define the core of IGAD today.

Without IGAD, the peace witnessed in the Horn of Africa region today would be inconceivable.

At the turn of this millenium, IGAD midwived two historic peace processes, in the Sudan and Somalia. Mr. Chairman, allow me at this stage to pay tribute to President Omar El Bashir, during whose term as the IGAD chair in 2002 and 2003 the negotiations with the SPLM under the late Dr. John Garang, another Pan Africanist, concluded critical agreements of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), providing a framework to end hostilities, share power and wealth and set up transitional security arrangements. In the same light, I wish to remember late Prime Minister MelesZenawi whose role, again as chair of the IGAD, chaperoned the post-CPA negotiations that led to the birth of South Sudan. Today, we are encouraged as a region that Sudan and South Sudan continue to negotiate on remaining differences.

As Somalia tethered under the weight of a complex web of threats both internal and external, the world despaired, gave up on this country and turned a blind eye to it, IGAD, did not give up. Instead, it resolved to engage and turn Somalia around. We gained traction and restored the global faith in Somalia. Today, Somalia is laying a strong foundation for its rehabilitation and reconstruction with the assistance and Solidarity of the region.

We in IGAD are indebted to the African Union for the unswerving support and its promotion of the idea of "African solutions to African problems" that has undoubtedly delivered successful outcomes in the region, specifically in Somalia and between Sudan and South Sudan.

We commend the Union's continued involvement in facilitating dialogue and deploying peace support operations in pursuit of lasting peace and stability.

**Mr. Chairperson, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As we begin the next decade of the OAU/AU, ad while aware that the challenges associated with State formation, self-determination of

peoples and resolution of conflicts among and within states still exist, we know that securing our future depends on us growing our economies, democratizing governance, managing our diversity and ensuring the equitable distribution of resources.

In the IGAD region we look to the next 50 years as a promise of renewal. We know that in order to secure the future, our interdependent future, we must evolve innovative ways to manage diversity while strengthening our state structures.

The cultural fabric of the Horn of Africa is as diverse as its physical environment, and we have come alive to this reality. In this regard, our politics must be conducted in a manner that not only recognizes those cultural differences but also harnesses them to build strong and responsible state structures and indeed nations that respond effectively to the needs of our peoples.

We aim to shift from decades of endless conflicts to decades of socio-economic growth, development and prosperity. For instance, though IGAD was initially formed with a narrow mandate to combat drought and desertification, it has over the years adapted to the changing realities to deal with political, economic and security issues.

In this regard, I would like to extend our appreciation for the support provided by development partners in helping realize this broad mandate.

Our main aim is to promote joint development projects that grow our economies rapidly and deepen integration through projects such as the Lamu Port, South Sudan and Ethiopia Transport corridor that will link the three countries of Kenya, South Sudan and Ethiopia, as part of the larger infrastructure network on the continent. Undoubtedly, this will become a driver of our regional integration through greater movement of goods, services and people within the region.

We seek to focus on the implementation and delivery of the promise of prosperity to our people.

We are shifting from theorizing about human and people's rights, gender equality, inclusion of youth and vulnerable groups, to having these values become part of our day to day modus operandi.

We are walking together, away from a state of anticipation to the realization of the full potential of our region, through harnessing our collective responsibility, drawing on our diversity and solidarity to guarantee our common destiny.

We do this also recognizing that this renewal is happening across Africa, and is an imperative for the African renaissance that gathers us here today.

IGAD has and remains committed to the pursuit of the African vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful continent.

In this regard, I express IGAD's full support for the African Union Commission and our continued commitment to contribute towards fulfilling its agenda.

Thank you for your kind attention.