



OFFICIAL REMARKS
WORKNEH GEBEYEHU, IGAD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

**SPECIAL SESSION OF THE IGAD SUPPORT PLATFORM AND ITS
SOLUTION INITIATIVE FOR THE REFUGEE SITUATION IN SUDAN
AND SOUTH SUDAN.**

Geneva, Tuesday, 5th October 2021

Thank you, moderator,

- Your Excellency **Mr. Filippo Grandi**, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;
- Your Excellency **Ms. Mariam El-Sadiq el-Mahdi**, Minister for Foreign Affairs, of the Republic of Sudan;
- Your Excellency **Mr. Deng Dau Deng Malek**, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Republic of South Sudan;
- Her Excellency **Ms. Jutta Urpilainen**, EU Commissioner for International Partnerships;
- Your Excellency **Dr. Ousmane Dione**, World Bank Country Director for Eritrea, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Sudan;
- Your Excellency **Ms. Nancy Izzo Jackson**, Sr. Bureau Official, BPRM, Department of State, US Government;
- Excellencies honourable ministers, ambassadors and representatives of IGAD Members states;
- Members of the diplomatic corps, distinguished delegates, colleagues' ladies and gentlemen all protocols observed;



It is an honour and privilege for me to address this Special Session of the IGAD Support Platform and its Solution Initiative for Sudan and South Sudan.

First, I sincerely want to thank UNHCR and the High Commissioner for Refugees, **Mr. Fillipo Grandi**, for convening this session, one year after the launch of the Sudan and South Sudan Solution Initiative, and two years since the launch of the IGAD Support Platform.

This is **an undeniable demonstration of our collective commitment to sustain the momentum on the implementation of the Global Compact for Refugees.**

The Sudan-South Sudan Solution Initiative is a flagship activity of the IGAD Support Platform and it **builds on the 2017 Nairobi Process on Somali situation** which aims to mobilize enhanced support to states and other stakeholders to respond to protracted displacement situations in the IGAD region.

It also aims to **enable IGAD Member States to operationalize the pledged commitments they made at the Global Refugee Forum** as an outcome of the Common Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) under the Global Compact on Refugees.

I wish to applaud both the Government of South Sudan and Sudan for their leadership and commitments to this noble initiative.

Of significant importance for our displaced populations are the stabilization dividends accruing from both the peace processes in our 2 member states namely; the Juba Peace Agreement between Sudan's Transitional Government and the Sudan Revolutionary Front and other parties that was signed on 3rd October 2020, and the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) signed on 12th September 2018.



These instruments for the cessation of conflict have **provided a unique opportunity to find lasting solutions for the over 7 million displaced people** in and from Sudan and South Sudan

I must also **recognize the humane aspect** of this Sudan-South Sudan Solutions Initiative which **goes above and beyond the traditional focus on refugees but also acknowledges and seeks to address the needs of Internally Displaced Populations (IDPs)**, who feature for the first time in our formal discussions on durable solutions to displacement.

Additionally, **the two countries have made deliberate efforts to promote a whole-of-society approach** in the pursuit of durable solutions by **guaranteeing the inclusion of refugees, IDPs and returnees in the development and implementation of national strategies and action plans.**

These efforts of our **Member States have been augmented by the support of stakeholders and partners in the international community** including members of the core group-EU, World Bank, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, UNHCR and other relevant actors including UN-country teams, NGOs, private sector and academia. **I am also happy to register the interest of the government of the USA to support the initiative.**

Now that the country strategies are in place and **as we move towards the finalization of the regional durable solution strategy**, there is a stronger need for support and collaboration among all stakeholders in solidarity with South Sudan and Sudan as well as the wider IGAD region, in furthering durable solutions as a long-term strategy to address displacement.



Moreover, in order to move the process forward through the implementation of the identified priorities, the two countries and the region require additional political, technical and financial support. We therefore **call on humanitarian and development partners to support the Initiative by helping create conditions that will allow displaced populations and the communities where they settle, live in safety and dignity, with greater security and services.**

As the IGAD Secretariat, we continue to pledge our support to the initiative and **commit to convene a heads of state summit in early 2022 to table the strategies for consideration and adoption by IGAD Heads of States and Government.**

I wish to conclude my remarks by **encouraging all of us to do our utmost to ensure that displaced populations are able to live a normal life** and become productive members of our society.

Thank you very much.