

## The Recurrent Barriers to Effective Economic Integration in IGAD and the Way Forward

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### Abstract

*Regional integration is central for solving development challenges that cannot be resolved at the national level. This research examines the recurrent blockades to regional integration in IGAD and their outcomes on the viability of the re-revitalized IGAD and suggests the way forward for making the bloc viable and vigorous. Qualitative design was employed. Policy and research experts, policy advisors, officers, directors and heads, universities instructors were participated. It is revealed that let alone sustained peace and integration, it has flunked to achieve the very objective of addressing common problem of drought and desertification for the last three decades. For this, several recurrent obstacles identified which militate against a viable regional integration in the IGAD Region among which include unrelenting lack of political will and commitment in terms of unresponsive to multi-level participation of private and civil society, unwilling to cede power to the sub-region and to incorporate regionally adopted policies into national programs; heavy economic dependency, and failing to honor financial contribution; multiple and overlapping membership that cause complications, policy incoherence and divided loyalty; poor level of communication and infrastructure; state-centric approach, intra- and inter-state unabated conflicts, mistrust and suspicion among the Member states, and absence of 'big brother and external influence. Evidence indicate that these major barricades will continue to bloc IGAD from effectuating the objectives envisaged in the new 2023 IGAD Treaty unless immediate remedial measures are taken.*

**Key Words:** Recurrent Barriers, IGAD Treaty, Economic Integration

### 1. Introduction

Currently, the IGAD region is beset by multi-dimensional and interwoven crises, including conflicts that have led to the deaths and migration of millions of people within and out of the region, severe drought affecting nearly 20 million people, and governance deficits. These crisis have plunged the region for several years. One of the mechanisms to address such problems is through forming regional economic community. Regional integration and cooperation are central for solving development challenges that cannot be resolved at the national level<sup>1</sup> and for geographically adjoining countries it serves as an overall method to reply to national, regional and international existing trials and expected threats,<sup>2</sup> and help augment a member state's (MS) bargaining power. RECs perhaps hold a greater legitimacy than the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) members such as the United States (US), British or France, which may try to

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<sup>1</sup> Byiers, B. (2016). The Political Economy of Regional Integration in Africa Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). IGAD Study <http://ecdpm.org/peria/igad>

<sup>2</sup> Abdi, A. M. (2018). An Analysis of Factors Hindering IGAD's Roles of Maintaining Regional Peace and Security: 2002-2017. Thesis, United States International University-Africa

impose external solutions rather than home-grown ones relevant to the local context and region.<sup>3</sup> Regional integration is an imperative for the Horn of Africa, in terms of prevention of conflicts and consolidation of economic and political reforms, and external challenges coming from outside the region.

With a view to adapt to the changes on the internal and international scene and the African Union reforms on June 12, 2023, Heads of States and Government adopted the establishment of re-revitalized IGAD<sup>4</sup>. Some of the objectives of the re-revitalized IGAD include hastening trade, investment, social and economic development cooperation among the Member States by lowering trade and economic barriers; creating a larger market with more opportunities and greater economies of scale for business. However, the region is beset by persistent predicament that may affect successful economic integration in the region as envisaged in the new Treaty. The objective of this study is, therefore, to examine the recurrent blockades to regional integration in IGAD and suggest the possible resolutions to make IGAD a viable and vigorous regional bloc. To realize this objective, this study employed qualitative design was used. Data were collected through primary and secondary sources, and interpretation was made by comparing it with standard literature review and theoretical perspective to draw appropriate findings, conclusion, and recommendations.

## **2. The Recurrent Barriers to Economic Integration in IGAD Envisaged in the New 2023 Treaty**

Economic integration is a multidimensional process which involves economic, cultural, social and political aspects. Likewise, the success of economic integration depends on a combination of social, economic and political factors. However, since its establishment in 1986, the IGAD region is beset by recurrent multiple, complex, and structural problems, interwoven internal and external troubles, human made and natural crisis, social, cultural, economic and political hurdles and governance deficits. Evidence indicates that these will continue to bloc IGAD from effectuating the objectives envisaged in the new 2023 IGAD Treaty unless immediate remedial measures are taken. The major barricades are discussed as follows.

### **2.1 Heavy Dependency on External Assistance**

To begin with, IGAD itself was the product of external assistance as a response to the severe drought and famine in the sub-region with the prodding of the UN Environment Program and a massive publicity given to the sub-region by international media during the height of famine. Some informants also share these by contending that IGAD is not a home grown institute and the initiative came from outside<sup>5</sup>. Since its inception, IGAD has not been in a position to financially maintain the organization's personnel, let alone the priority areas. Member states have, thus, relied heavily on the financial and technical assistance of the Western states and their institutions who provide 81.5% of the total programs funding. Member States assessed contributions is only about

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<sup>3</sup> Lucey, A. and Berouk M. (2016). More than a chip off the block: Strengthening IGAD–AU peace-building linkages. POLICY BRIEF 91, September 2016 Institute for Security Studies; Elowson, C. and de Albuquerque, A.L. (2016). Challenges to Peace and Security in Eastern Africa: The role of IGAD, EAC and EASF, Studies in African Security

<sup>4</sup> IGAD (2023) Treaty Establishing the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Assembly of Heads of State and Government. Djibouti - See Article 3 of the 2023 Treaty.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with lecturers, Bar Dar University and Hawassa University, 2023.

12% of the total IGAD budget<sup>6</sup> and the rest is from non-traditional donors like China, Turkey and Middle-Eastern countries. This external assistance is even not sufficient to run the envisaged projects for the coming years. For example, the implementation of the 2021-2025 regional strategy requires USD 586,552,759 but the available fund is just USD 105,543,533 which is a shortfall of 82.0%<sup>7</sup> that requires to raise huge funds. This huge amount cannot be covered by member states and remains the barricade for effectuating the re-revitalized IGAD.

The decades of relationships and assistance have not brought about development nor solved structural problems in the Horn of Africa, rather it prevented the establishment of mutually beneficial economic ties among these countries, and kept the Horn of African countries in a position of suppliers of raw materials for the Western. As Tewodros and Gosa (2019) noted because of IGAD's tenacious dependence on donor organizations, it failed to have autonomous power to decide on the key matters of the organization, a notable example is the initial economic objective of the organization is more dominated by peace and security issues due to the donor's interest<sup>8</sup>. It may even compromise the integrity, legitimacy, and ownership of peace mediation<sup>9</sup>. Thus, IGAD's heavily dependence on outside resources for the maintenance of the organization and functioning of its activities has been and remains to be one of the fundamental predicaments which diverge its initial economic integration objective. This dependence has greatly affected negatively and will continue to make IGAD weak in realizing its short, medium and long-term development plans by its own as envisaged in the 2021-2025 strategic framework as well as in the new 2023 Treaty. Thus, for a viable economic integration to exist in the IGAD region, the strategy of greater self-reliance that enables it to escape from the historical dependence on the developed countries is important.

## **2.2 Lack of Political Will and Commitment**

With regard to Member states' commitment, three important issues for success are still left unsolved in IGAD and will remain the challenge for some time to come in the future: As reflected in the new re-revitalized Treaty, Member states are not yet ready to cede real power to the regional body; harmonization of policies remains rhetoric; and meeting the human and financial resource commitments are far from attainment.

### **2.2.1 Lack of Super-nationality and Governance Deficit**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century REC requires the participation of multi-actors. However, the IGAD region is still characterized by chronic governance deficits<sup>10</sup>; and regional political elites are not yet ready to

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<sup>6</sup> IGAD (2020), IGAD Regional Strategy The Framework, Information and Documentation Section of IGAD Secretariat,

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Tewodros Woldearegay and Gosa Abera Mamo (2019). The way-forward to make inter-governmental authority on development (IGAD) successful in actualizing a viable economic integration, African Journal of Political Science and International Relations, Vol. 13(4), pp. 53-61.

<sup>9</sup> Adetula, V., Bereketeab, R. and Obi, C. (2019), "Introduction: Regional economic communities and peace-building in West Africa and the Horn of Africa" in Regional Economic Communities and Peacekeeping in Africa: Lessons from ECOWAS and IGAD, eds., Victor Adetula, Redie Bereketeab, and Cyril Obi, pp1-19, London: Routledge

<sup>10</sup> Institute for Security Study (ISS, 2023). Special Report: The State of Governance, Peace and Security in the Horn of Africa. ISS, June 2023, Retrieved from | [www.compressdsl.com](http://www.compressdsl.com)

cede power as evidenced in the new re-revitalized IGAD Treaty. The re-revitalized IGAD is still devoid of power to enforce decisions over its constituencies. As stipulated in the new Treaty, IGAD has a supreme organ that comprises Heads of State and Government, a Council of Ministries, a Committee of Ambassadors and a Secretariat<sup>11</sup>. This structure, like the 1996 Agreement, is a top heavy and burdensome which allows governments to avoid a loss of sovereignty through unilateral decisions on the applications of regional agreements, and so constraint the engagement of the public. So, the follow up of decisions taken at sub-regional meetings is left to Heads of State or to too few ministers and to civil servants in the ministries dealing with cooperation matters.

Although under Articles 34, 35 and 36 of the new 2023 Treaty, Member states claim that they provide enabling environment for the private sector, the civil society and professional bodies as well as gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, the top down structure as in the past will restrict the involvement of non-state actors and the people at large<sup>12</sup>. While ECOWAS has developed a more sophisticated peace and security architecture, as well as stronger mechanisms and connections with civil society in setting up a sophisticated early warning system and election monitoring processes, IGAD has yet to build strong mechanisms, and foster an effective level of participation by civil society in its peace and security institutions and processes<sup>13</sup>. It can be argued that IGAD in this regard has a problem of having mass representation in its framework.

Some contend that IGAD has a patrimonial governance structure which resulted in essentially the detachment of the public and private sector from IGAD in a greater scale<sup>14</sup>, some Member states such as Uganda even ratified laws to oust the political participation of non-state actors from their domestic political system. In Eritrea, election has never been conducted in its thirty years history and non-state actors' participation has been nominal<sup>15</sup>. The recent report of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) states:

Echoing a trend observed in other regions of Africa, the panoply of governance systems in the HoA range from autocracies to electoral democracies, and from fairly stable governments to flailing ones. ..., top-down models of governance and weak mechanisms for popular participation further the perception that governance in the HoA serves elite interests<sup>16</sup>. (Ellipses mine)

While the experience of each country is unique, all countries of the HoA present an interplay of structural and governance deficits<sup>17</sup>. The unilateral governance arrangement is proved by IGAD in its 2021-25 regional strategy framework by noting that member states are prone to severe governance problems, rampant corruption, election-related. Most informants<sup>18</sup> state that the major problem of IGAD is inside within each Member states, the absence of strong leadership and good governance and democracy deficit. Thus, integration in the sub region lacks a strong supranational

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<sup>11</sup> See Article 10 of the revitalized Treaty (IGAD, 2023)

<sup>12</sup> Interview with lecturers, Hawassa University and Bahr Dar University

<sup>13</sup> Interview with lecturer, Bahr Dar University; Adetula, V., Bereketeb,R. and Obi, C. (2019)

<sup>14</sup> Tewodros and Gosa (2019)

<sup>15</sup> Interview with lecturers, Bah Dar University and Hawassa University, 2023

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> See Tewodros and Gosa (2019)

<sup>18</sup> Interview with lecturers, Dire Dawa University and Hawassa university, 2023

authority and governance deficit of involving the public which has been and will be an obstructing factor to an attempt to integration in the IGAD sub-region envisaged in the new Treaty.

Though the 2023 new re-revitalized IGAD in its preamble claims that it recognizes the need to strengthen the Secretariat with robust mandate, adequate powers and resources, member countries have been unable to articulate minimum conditions for cooperation with regard to commitment, and the Executive Secretary is appointed by Heads of State and Government (Article 25) and accountable to them, so IGAD secretariat is toothless in its sphere of authorities.

As stated above, principles Governing IGAD such as non-interference in the internal affairs, as in the past, will limit the effectiveness of the Organization in charging the mandate entrusted in it. It only appeals and urges to the disputing parties to refrain from further action without passing binding resolution. Moreover, the IGAD conflict management action<sup>19</sup> is limited in the sense that it does not pass binding solutions. So IGAD does not have the clout and the necessary abilities to deal with the inter-state and intra-state conflicts due to the lack of political commitment to cede power to institutions like a court and a parliament which are commanding for a viable REC.

### **2.2.2 Lack of Commitment to Incorporate Regional Policies into National Programs**

Commitment by governments to incorporate regionally adopted policies into national programs is crucial for effective integration. As stipulated in the New Treaty under Articles 26, 27, 28, 29, 34, 38 and 40, the Member States undertake to co-ordinate and harmonize in the development and promotion of transport and communications, tourism, agriculture and food security, investment, education and health policies.

However, even though member countries continue to speak of collective action for economic integration, no single country has as yet designed its national plans to be consistent with the promotion of effective integration for development. This is also supported by the recent report of Institute for Security Study (ISS, 2023) which notes that although countries of the region also have shared aspiration, in practice, national policies and interests of the Horn of African states are not automatically aligned to a traceable set of unifying regional values<sup>20</sup>. As stipulated under Article 6 of the 2023 Treaty, the planning, aligning of policies and resources, monitoring and evaluation and the implementation of the Treaty, policies and programs are left with the Member States<sup>21</sup>. The ISS report<sup>22</sup> further notes that, in spite of that fact that all regional governments have aligned their environmental plans to their developmental priorities, no government in the region has yet performed convincingly on the basic goals, due to incoherence in the implementation of plans,

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<sup>19</sup> Article 57(1) Dispute Resolution Mechanism; Disputes arising out of the interpretation of the obligations contained in the Treaty shall be settled amicably by the Council of Ministers through negotiations.

<sup>20</sup> Institute for Security Study (ISS, 2023). Special Report: The State of Governance, Peace and Security in the Horn of Africa. ISS, June 2023, Retrieved from [www.compressdsl.com](http://www.compressdsl.com)

<sup>21</sup> Article 6(1) of the Treaty states the Member States shall: (a) plan and align their policies and resources with a view to creating conditions favorable for the achievement of the objectives of IGAD and the implementation

of the provisions of the Treaty; (b) co-ordinate, through the organs of IGAD, their policies to the extent necessary to achieve the objectives of IGAD; (c) monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Treaty, policies and programs; 2. Each Member State shall take all necessary measures, including the enactment of legislation, to effectively implement the Treaty.

<sup>22</sup> ISS, 2023

governance challenges and an overall environment of political instability. This may continue without major improvements given the current situation of the region and absence of commitment.

Given the absence of commitment to regional economic integration by Member states, such provisions which allow member countries to individually developing their own strategies, plan and priorities will lead to the mismatch between national and regional economic policies. Consequently, the lack of commitment to harmonize national and regional policies remains a challenge to effective integration at least in the near future.

### **2.2.3 Lack of Resources Commitment**

The lack of commitment has also been reflected in tardy payment of budgetary contribution and a low level of participation in meetings. To begin with, the finance of IGAD is unenviable. Some Member states are still not paid their contribution.

Article 51(1) of the new re-revitalized IGAD Treaty, like the previous one, stipulates that any member state that is in arrears for the preceding two years and above is not able to speak or host or chair or vote at experts and policy organs of IGAD and is not allowed to present candidates for any position or post within IGAD, or to benefit from any activity of IGAD. But this has not been put into practice and will remain the same as far as enforcing mechanisms and independent institutions such as a court are not in place. As some informants<sup>23</sup> remark the strength of IGAD depends on the internal strength of Member states. However, the IGAD member states are economically poor, lacking political culture of tolerance, are in crisis and devoid of independent and strong institutions. One of the informants<sup>24</sup> states, “IGAD is the father of poor countries which in turn produces poor and weak institutions”

What is more, the lack of commitment, by the participating governments is manifested itself in the different meetings. The Heads of States and Governments meeting have not been regularly held. So far only 14 ordinary Heads of State and Government meetings were held but about 40 extraordinary Assembly of Heads of State and government have been held. So, most of the meetings have been extra-ordinary which indicates that they are engaged more on ‘fire-brigade’ than regular activates and to assess the implementation of projects. Some Member states have even not regularly attended the meeting. For example, in most of the meetings of the Heads of State and Government<sup>25</sup>, Uganda was represented by its foreign minister including the recent 14<sup>th</sup> regular Summit.

As far as there is no super-nationality in IGAD and fundamental principles governing IGAD remains the same which is based on sovereign equality of all member States and non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States (see Article 4 of the new Treaty)<sup>26</sup>, the lack of commitment which has been reflected in tardy payment of budgetary contribution and a low level of participation in meetings and absence of regular Summit of the Heads of States and Government

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<sup>23</sup> Interview with lecturers, Hawassa University and Bahr Dar University, 2023

<sup>24</sup> Interview with lecturer, Hawassa University, 2023

<sup>25</sup> Interview with senior Diplomat, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023

<sup>26</sup> IGAD (2023), Article 4 stipulates the Fundamental Principles Governing IGAD which include among others Sovereign equality of all member States, and non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States

will remain the same which will adversely affect the attempt to economic integration in the sub-region of IGAD envisaged in the re-revitalized Treaty and the 2020-2025 regional strategy as well.

### 2.3 Overlapping Membership

Several studies<sup>27</sup> have recognized the problem of duplication and overlapping memberships in RECs, which has had the net effect of undermining integration. Partly the problem emanated from AU’s decision to recognize the overlapping regional blocs such as IGAD, COMESA & EAC as three distinct building blocks of AU. Overlapping and manifold memberships in RECs have created a complicated web of competing commitments which, combined with different rules, result in high costs of trade between members countries, in effect undermining integration<sup>28</sup>. It will also remain a hurdle to the attempt to sub regional integration in IGAD in the future as the problem has not yet been resolved. Some IGAD member states (Djibouti, Somalia and Sudan) are also member of the Arab League and half of the IGAD Member states are also members of the Red Sea Forum, which has incompatible interest with the aspiration of some other member states particularly Ethiopia. No state in the HoA is found to belong to only one REC, they are rather members of different groupings. For example, Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda have also been members of the Eastern African Community (EAC); and all IGAD members except South Sudan are also members of COMESA (See the Table below).

Table 1: Overlapping of Membership

IGAD	EAC	COMESA	EASF	EAFU	ICGLR	NBI	Arab League	Red-Sea Forum
Djibouti	Kenya	Djibouti	Djibouti				Djibouti	Djibouti
Eritrea		Eritrea						Eritrea
Ethiopia		Ethiopia	Ethiopia	Ethiopia		Ethiopia		
Kenya		Kenya	Kenya	Kenya	Kenya	Kenya		
Somalia		Somalia	Somalia	Somalia			Somalia	Somalia
S. Sudan	S. Sudan			S. Sudan	S. Sudan	S. Sudan		
Sudan		Sudan	Sudan	Sudan	Sudan	Sudan	Sudan	Sudan
Uganda	Uganda	Uganda	Uganda	Uganda	Uganda	Uganda		
	Burundi, DRC, Rwanda, Tanzania	Burundi, Comoros, DRC, Egypt, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Tunisia, Zambia, Zimbabwe	Burundi Comoros Rwanda Seychelles	Burundi Tanzania	Burundi CAR, DRC Angola, Rwanda Tanzania Zambia	Eritrea(an observer) Burundi DRC, Egypt Rwanda Tanzania,	Algeria, Bahrain, Comoro, Egypt, Iraq, & other countries( A total of 22)	Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, & Yemen

Such duplication of functions create constraints in the integration process in that they, in the first place, make regional integration costly, inefficient and ineffective, secondly they cause complications and inconsistencies, policy incoherence due to conflicting mandates and obligations

<sup>27</sup> Tesfaye Molla (2002), Roadblocks to Economic Integration in the IGAD Sub-Regional, MA Thesis, AAU Publication; Ndomo, Atieno (2009). Regional Economic Communities in Africa A Progress Overview , Study Commissioned by GTZ

<sup>28</sup> Ndomo (2009); Interview with lecturer, Bahr Dar University, 2023

as well as divided loyalty among governments<sup>29</sup>; thirdly, they impose heavy financial and administrative burdens on individual government<sup>30</sup>; and fourthly, it complicates the Horn of Africa's trade and economic relations with the rest of the world, as for example evidenced in the Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations with the European Union<sup>31</sup>. Finally, they lead Member states to adopt different sectoral harmonization models and policies, thus creating dilemmas for countries leading to delays in implementation of region-wide program objectives. This will continue to work against integration attempts in the IGAD sub-region unless mechanism is designed to address the problem.

As some informants as well as secondary sources confirmed, the divergent positions and interests of IGAD's member states, contributes to decelerating prospects for robust multilateralism and disperses the allegiance of countries of the region into several multilateral domains<sup>32</sup>. Kenya and Uganda in particular have divergent interest and need IGAD for political than economic reasons<sup>33</sup>. To use the words of ISS (2023) "This distribution of loyalties diminishes IGAD's political clout and creates competition with adjacent or co-dependent multilateral actors, in particular the EAC.

#### **2.4 Poor Economic Status, Communication and Infrastructural Development Transport among the Member States**

Let alone sustained pace and integration, the region has failed to achieve the very objective of addressing common problem of drought and desertification. Currently, the region is seriously affected by drought which triggered large-scale population displacement with close to 2 million people becoming internally displaced and increasing the refugee burden in the region because approximately 40,000 sought asylum from hunger in neighboring countries in 2022<sup>34</sup> alone and now the number of displaced people are increasing for both human and natural reasons. In Ethiopia, in the Borena alone millions of cattle have been killed and crops destroyed in 2023.

The success of economic integration in developing countries depends in part on the efficient performance and effective support of the transport and communication sectors and harmonization of coordinating efforts of the partner states. Indeed, Article 26 of the 2023 Treaty states that the Member States undertake to co-ordinate, harmonies transport and communications policies, improve and expand the existing transport and communications links and establish new ones. Moreover, under the 2021-2025 strategy, IGAD is expected to contribute towards developing a unified regional market with expanded infrastructure and connectivity - underpinned by the AfCFTA with expansion of 30% transport and ICT infrastructure linkages and continental power pools leading to 15% increase in intra-regional trade, 15% in manufacturing and 10% in tourism<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> IGAD (2020). IGAD Regional Strategy Framework 2021-2025. Despite IGAD's cross sectoral targeted policy and regulatory frameworks IGAD Member States belong to multiple RECs, subscribing to different policy and regulatory frameworks which has resulted in conflicting national choices on which the policy framework should be adopted in the interest of the wider community.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Lecturers, Hawassa University, 2023

<sup>31</sup> Kiefe (1995) Ndomo (2009);

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Senior Diplomats. Ministry of Foreign Affairs; ISS, 2023

<sup>33</sup> Interview with senior Diplomats and Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023

<sup>34</sup> Executive Secretary of IGAD address, 3<sup>rd</sup> State of the IGAD Region, 1st February 2023.

<sup>35</sup> IGAD (2020). IGAD Regional Strategy Framework 2021-2025



However, this remains the paper objective. Still intra-regional communication is poor. There is no adequate social and physical services such as adequate roads, railways, airways, sea ways which connect the countries of the sub-region. The region's markets remain extremely fragmented, with poor (though improving) infrastructure that raises the costs of transport between and even within countries<sup>36</sup>. These problems are more pronounced in landlocked countries such as Ethiopia and South Sudan, where high transaction costs are the result of their own poor infrastructure and that of their transit neighbors.

Despite the presence of some projects like that of the Lamu Port, South Sudan and Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) Corridor, Member States of IGAD in general have very poor transport system (road and railway) maintenance records due to "poor government policies and insufficient allocation of funds for maintenance"<sup>37</sup>. IGAD has been trying to secure funds for its projects owing to its emphasis on infrastructure development from its 'partners', but it is not encouraging<sup>38</sup>. Thus, constraint of financial resource remains the basic challenge to effective economic integration in the sub-region of IGAD.

Poor communication among the members of IGAD is also manifested in the lack of common currency. On June 13, 2023, during his address at the Djibouti parliament, Kenya's President Dr. William Ruto urged African countries to adopt a common currency for intra-Africa trade proclaiming that relying on US dollar is harmful to the continent's economic integration and development as it creates transaction costs, exposes African countries to currency fluctuation and undermine their sovereignty. He, then, advocated to move away from the US dollar and embrace common currency that reflect African reality. Indeed, effective integration demands the use of common currency and will help in settlement of payments among governments and people and promote intra-trade and investment. However, it seems it is a lip service. Because in practice, all member states of IGAD continue to use their own currencies. Let alone the use of common currency they are not ready even to implement the minimum integration plan.

IGAD has designed a minimum integration plan in 2012 to gradually harmonize trade practices and policies of member states and to eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers, yet it is unable to realize it. Compare to other African RECs, IGAD lags behind. It was also expected to establish a Free Trade Area (FTA) and implement free movement within the sub-region in 2017 as per AU Framework of Cooperation but it was not operational. This remains a blockade to effective integration in that it retards the achievement of a free flow of goods and services, capital movements and unilateral transfer.

Moreover, though the IGAD 2023 Treaty emphasizes promotion of regional trade and gradual harmonization of policies and removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers to inter-state trade, transport and communications, there are still barriers to the intra-regional trade. These are: major differences in tariff rates among member countries, use of different custom declaration documents, cumbersome administrative procedures, different legal interpretation of insurance claims, restriction of foreign exchange allocation, imposition of unilateral bans and discriminative procedure at points of entry/exist. The challenge to effective integration is also reflected in the poor

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Senior Diplomats, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023

records of intra-trade in the sub-region of IGAD. In some Member States, market-based policies have not been fully embraced. Trade among countries in the Horn of Africa were insignificant, which stood at a paltry 5%<sup>39</sup>, due to their poor level of development and being producers of primary and similar goods. The bulk (95%) of trade took place outside the IGAD region. The region has not implemented an IGAD FTA. These limited trade links among member states of IGAD restrict the foundation on which regional economic integration scheme between them have been based. Political differences between countries and political instability within countries in the sub-region as discussed below are partly responsible for the low level of official trans-border trade in the sub-region.

## **2.5 Conflict, Insecurity, and Mistrust among the Member states**

The conflict and dispute spectrum in the HoA is in flux, shifting from interstate conflicts to intra-state conflicts, from conventional to nonconventional methods and from traditional to non-traditional threats, all within the context of political transitions. These changes are disrupting governments, upsetting regional integration and posing threats to governance, peace and security that extend beyond the traditional military, economic and diplomatic domains. Across the region, traditional or conventional methods dominate warfare but at the same time conflict is hybridizing and increasingly incorporating the use of drones, network technology and ‘influence operations’, such as disinformation and misinformation. As the examples of Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan demonstrate, conflict and civil unrest are correspondingly urbanized or urbanizing and often include anonymized use of hate speech and information warfare (emphasis mine, ISS, 2023)<sup>40</sup>.

Conflicts constitute one of the greatest barriers currently facing IGAD. The sub-region is viewed as being in a state of crisis, and has been characterized by internal strife, conflict and/or civil war as well as drought and humanitarian disaster for the last three and half decades since the establishment of IGAD. To use the words of ISS (2023:13)<sup>41</sup>, “[w]hile being driven by decades old structural dynamics, conflict situations integrate with systemic climate stress, pandemics and new information and communication technology to alter the threat landscape in the region.” It further states “Although these changes had been decades in the making, the pace at which they are unfolding as well as their complexity cause regional uncertainty in the Horn of Africa.” As stated above, the conflict trend is fluid, shifting from interstate conflicts to intra-state conflicts, from conventional to nonconventional methods and from traditional to non-traditional threats using drone even by Al-Shabaab.<sup>42</sup>

Since independence in 1956 Sudan has been in civil war in most years of self-rule. Recently, on 15 April 2023, fighting broke out between General Abdalfattah Al-Burhan and General Mohammed Hamdan Daggle (Hemedtti) forces though the political Framework Agreement was signed on

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<sup>39</sup> IGAD (2020). IGAD Regional Strategy Framework 2021 2025

<sup>40</sup> ISS (Institute for Security Studies) (2023). Special Report: The State of Governance, Peace and Security in the Horn of Africa, JUNE 2023

<sup>41</sup> Ibid

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Lecturers, Hawassa University and Bahr Dar University, 2023; See Dass, R. (2022).

Militant and Drones: A Trend That is Here to Stay, RUSI reported that . Al=Shabaab in Somalia has used fixed-wing drones for surveillance and attacks.

December 5, 2022 by more than 40 political organizations including the military representative which gave hope of a peaceful and stable Sudan. The conflict has become complex as alliances being created and various local and external actors are involved, resulted in the killing of several people and displacement of millions from their home, fleeing to neighboring countries. According to IOM (2023)<sup>43</sup>, over 2.1 million people have been newly displaced, including 1,670,991 displaced internally; and the situation in Darfur remains tense, with renewed ethnic fighting between Arab and Massalit communities in El Geneina (West Darfur). The chances of resolving the dispute amicably are declining every day that decisive action is needed but not taken<sup>44</sup>.

Since the outbreak, IGAD has been trying to engage the two sides aimed at ensuring that parties in conflict conclude permanent cease fire but in vain. Currently, IGAD in its attempt to broker a peace between factions adopts the roadmap for the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of Sudan with the following action points<sup>45</sup>:

1. Include the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia as the fourth member of the IGAD High-Level Delegation for the Peace Process in the Republic of Sudan; and for H.E. William Ruto, President of the Republic of Kenya, to Chair the Quartet Countries of the Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan and for the Quartet to work in close coordination with the African Union Commission; 2. Within ten (10) days, the Quartet to arrange face-to-face meeting between H.E. Lt. Gen. Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, the Chairperson of the Transitional Sovereignty Council of the Republic of Sudan, and Gen. Muhammad Hamdan Dagalo in one of the regional capitals; 3. Within two (2) weeks secure a commitment from the leadership of SAF and RSF to establish a humanitarian corridor; 4. Within three (3) weeks initiate an inclusive political process towards a political settlement of the conflict in the Republic of Sudan

After four weeks, it has not yet been able to bring the two sides into a round table let alone initiate an inclusive political process towards a political settlement of the conflict though very recently attempts have made in Addis Ababa on July 10, 2023 and in Cairo 0 July 13, 2023. And more importantly, the leadership of Ruto to chair the Quartet is rejected by Sudanese government which complicates the process. Only time will tell us whether the Quartet will bring peace in the Sudan. Some informants<sup>46</sup> note that the IGAD region needs leadership who are visionary to transform the region and are not tied to their specific ethnic or religion group, and work for the unity of and the wider interest of the people of the region.

Despite the signing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), in 2018 to culminate the civil war, the implementation has been slow and the opposing forces have fought repeatedly. It can be argued that this has taken much of IGAD's efforts to address such challenges which reduces its exertions towards economic

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<sup>43</sup> IOM (2023) Regional Sudan Response Situation Update 13 June 2023 [https://sudan.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1606/files/documents/2023-06/iom-sudan-external-situation-report-9\\_0.pdf](https://sudan.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1606/files/documents/2023-06/iom-sudan-external-situation-report-9_0.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> Official Statement by Workneh Gebeyehu, IGAD Executive Secretary 1156th Virtual HoSG Meeting of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on the Situation in Sudan Saturday 27th May 2023

<sup>45</sup> Final Communiqué of the 14th Ordinary Session of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government Djibouti, Republic Of Djibouti 12th June 2023

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Lecturers, Bahr Dar University, 2023

integration. In Somalia, the recent fighting in Las Anod which began in February 2023 between the troops of Somaliland and local militia from the Dhulbahante clan in northern Somalia continues, exacerbating from time to time, and resulted in increasing the number of casualties. Al-Shabaab also continues to conduct attacks both within Somalia and in neighboring states, targeting civilians, the Somali state, and the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). Recently, more than 50 Ugandan peacekeepers killed in Al-Shabaab attack in Somalia. The ATMIS and the Somali force have failed to effectively preserve peace and to successfully fight against Al Shebaab<sup>47</sup>. The Crisis in Somalia will continue to challenge the IGAD region and be a hurdle for viable economic integration.

Through the auspices of AU and the US, the Ethiopian government and TPLF reached agreement to end hostilities and silence the gun in Pretoria, South Africa, but IGAD's role is minimal<sup>48</sup>. However, conflict in Amhara and other regions civil conflict continues which calls for the Government to pursue with its efforts in engaging all elements in peaceful dialogue to enhance the gains of peace and ensure full-fledged stability in the country. It is to be noted that these domestic conflicts have negative impact on inter-state relations among the countries of the IGAD sub-region. Indeed, currently, there is no active interstate conflict in the region, but residual disputes still exist between Djibouti and Eritrea, Somalia and Kenya and between South Sudan and Sudan, with an intermittently active flashpoint between Ethiopia and Sudan, and between Kenya and South Sudan<sup>49</sup>. While these disputes remain dormant but unresolved, they are easily inflammable and, in the case of Kenya and Somalia, overlap with resource disputes at the maritime border between the two countries. Another strand of intra-regional competition originates from the tension over transboundary resources (chiefly water) and transnational threats as well as the conflicting approaches to addressing them<sup>50</sup>.

One cannot think of a viable economic cooperation, let alone of integration among countries, if relations among states are not underpinned by modes of behavior that foster mutual trust and mutual confidence. The domestic crisis in Member states and tensions between them continue to severely disrupt trade and market functionality, restrict movement of people within the national border let alone among Member states which is envisage in the 2021-2025 regional Strategy framework and the 2023 re-revitalized Treaty.

## **2.6 Absence of Big Brother and External Influences**

One of factors for viable and successful integration scheme is 'Big brother'. Regional blocs in most of the developing countries consist of poor states with limited size of national and sub-regional markets, and hence their low level of development may not allow much market expansion through regionalism. It is, thus, proposed that at least one of the partner countries in the bloc should have a reasonably big market to enable the reaping of economies of scale at a regional level<sup>51</sup>. In addition to the enlargement of the size of the market, it is believed that the sub-regional's international status and global bargaining power will be enhanced by inclusion of major trading countries, which are

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<sup>47</sup> Interview with Lecturers and Senior Diplomats, 2023

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Senior Diplomat and Ambassador, 2023

<sup>49</sup> ISA, 2023

<sup>50</sup> Ibid

<sup>51</sup> Bhalla, A.S. and Bhalla, P. (1997). *Regional Blocs: Building Blocks or Stumbling Blocks?* London: Macmillan Press Ltd.

able to assist the regional integration arrangements to assert this power in the world stage. They support their argument by providing examples: such as Germany in the European Union; Brazil in MERCOSUR; the United States in NAFTA; South Africa in SADC; Nigeria in ECOWAS; and India in SAARC.

However, the IGAD region is constrained by the absence of ‘big-brother’<sup>52</sup> that would help increase the bargaining power of the sub- region and make the dynamic gains from regional blocs. In recent past, an ‘emerging hegemon’ in the region - Ethiopia and Ethiopian interests shape IGAD’s actions, determined much of IGAD’s room for maneuver, particularly in the realm of economic integration and trade, and played a key role in South Sudan mediation efforts,<sup>53</sup> in Somalia, and between Sudan and South Sudan. Some informants<sup>54</sup> have also confirmed this by saying that Ethiopia who had a relatively political and economic powerful played the leading role. IGAD served as a forum for pursuing Ethiopia’s foreign policy albeit its role has been diminishing in recent years<sup>55</sup>. Indeed, currently, political power in the IGAD region is dispersed between different countries and across multiple economic, political and diplomatic entities. As ISS<sup>56</sup> (2023) aptly notes, unlike in West Africa, where Nigeria dominates the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in the HoA, no state has the economic, diplomatic and political tools and the agreement of peers to act as an overarching center of gravity. Given the absence of a steady anchor in the IGAD region, the opportunistic deployment of sovereignty and the uncertainty of regional multilateralism make for intra-regional competition which creates rivalry and uncertainty that is regularly exploited by extra-regional actors<sup>57</sup>.

Being a strategically and economically important region and an area connecting the three continents, Africa, Europe, and Asia, geopolitical rivalries among old and new powers create the imperative for the countries of the region to pick sides, thereby complicating efforts to establish sustainable collective security mechanisms. In Somalia, the acrimony between the federal Somali government and regional states has been attributed to the increased intervention of external powers backing different sides. Also in Ethiopia, during the conflict between the Federal government and the TPLF, external intervention backing the TPLF prolonged and complicated the conflict. The same is true with respect to the current civil war in the Sudan and tension over the GERD. Besides, conflict outside the region may have implication for the region. The active conflict in Ukraine has had a massive effect on the regional economy inflated the prices of food, fertilizer and fuel. For instance, over the past two years food prices in the IGAD region increased by an average of 55.6% compelling the neediest to spend over 90% on food alone<sup>58</sup>. Therefore, external factor is considered as another major roadblock for effective integration in the region.

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<sup>52</sup> Regional blocs in most of the developing countries consist of poor states with limited size of national and sub-regional markets. Their low level of development may not allow much market expansion through regionalism.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Senior Diplomats and Lecturers, 2023

<sup>55</sup> Interview with Lecturers, Hawassa University March 2023; Bahr Dhar University, March, 2023 ; Ambassador Senior Diplomats, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 23, 2023

<sup>56</sup> ISS (2023).

<sup>57</sup> Ibid

<sup>58</sup> IGAD Executive Secretary, Dr. Workneh Speech

Over the last decade, the Red Sea has increasingly become militarized as foreign powers have stepped on each other's toes to establish military bases and naval facilities along the Red Sea<sup>59</sup>, which accentuates the peace and security challenges of the IGAD region<sup>60</sup>. The IGAD region has become a fertile center for geopolitical power struggles from Middle Eastern powers (Saudi Arabia-UAE-Egypt alliance against the Qatar-Turkey-Iran axis); Euro-Atlantic alliance against Eurasian power (Russia); between the Far-East powers China and Japan; and at a global level between US and China<sup>61</sup>. In spite of the recent efforts to drive economic development, external involvement in the Horn of Africa have often engaged in rivalries between foreign powers for influence and local actors' exploitation of such competitions have favored the persistence of endemic political instability that have had devastating consequences for the wider region<sup>62</sup>. For example, Middle Eastern outreach is on the upswing, shaping dynamics in Somalia and Sudan, and between Ethiopia and Somalia<sup>63</sup>. In this regard, the Special Report by ISS (2023) states:

In Somalia, the acrimony between the federal Somali government and regional states has been attributed to the increased intervention of external powers backing different sides... and the potentially destabilizing impact of Turkey and the UAE on the relationship between the administration of Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and the federal states. In Sudan, the alleged rift between Burhan and Hemedti ostensibly originates from the latter's relationship with the UAE, and the extent to which both leverage their contacts with the West and Russia. (Ellipses mine, ISS, 2023; p20)

The same report indicated that IGAD established a Taskforce on the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, in 2019, and appointed a Special Envoy to lead the development of multidisciplinary policy-oriented research to triangulate responses and Chart a common position for safeguarding the security and economic interests of the region<sup>64</sup>. However, the establishment of the Taskforce appears to be

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<sup>59</sup> Pamba, Edmond J. (2021). Foreign Powers and the Geopolitics of Instability: The Case of North and the Horn of Africa, In the Horn of Africa Bulletin, Volume IV, Issue I January-February 2021

<sup>60</sup> Mehari Taddele Maru (2018). "Evolving Peace Trends and Regional Integration: Opportunities for revitalizing Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)", in Political Dynamics in the Horn of Africa: Nurturing the Emerging Peace Trends, pp22-28, Tana Forum Secretariat at the Institute for Peace and Security Studies, Addis Ababa University

<sup>61</sup> IARAN, Inter-Agency Regional Analysts Network (March 2017) East Africa and the Horn in 2022: Mahmoud, O. S. (2020, January 28). The Middle East's Complicated Engagement in the Horn of Africa. United States Institute of Peace Retrieved from <https://www.usip.org/publications/2020/01/middle-east-complicated-engagement-horn-africa>; Pamba, Edmond J. (2021). Foreign Powers and the Geopolitics of Instability: The Case of North and the Horn of Africa, In the Horn of Africa Bulletin, Volume IV, Issue I January-February 2021; Telci, I. N..(2021). The Horn of Africa as venue for Regional competition: Motivations, Instruments and Relationship Patterns. Insight Africa

<sup>62</sup> Ylonen, A. (2022). A Scramble of external powers and local agency in the Horn of Africa. CIBOB, Newsletter, Notes International 280

<sup>63</sup> Joint Communique between Ethiopia and Somalia, September 29, 2022. In this communique, the parties agreed to jointly address extra-regional actors that could destabilize their relations, tacitly referencing actors from the Arabian Peninsula

<sup>64</sup> The 46th Ordinary Session of IGAD Executive Council of Ministers held in Djibouti on 27 February 2019. Accordingly, '[T] he IGAD Council of Ministers designed Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Taskforce to be focal point for increasing IGAD's understanding of common regional challenges by engaging with institutions such as the Red Sea Council, Arctic Council, Baltic Sea Council, Straits of Malacca, Open Pacific and adjacent organizations in the Middle

rather defensive. There is no also legal mechanism under the new Treaty which imposes on member states to harmonize and adopt common positions within the Authority on issues relating to international negotiations like the Red Sea with third parties in order to promote and safeguard the interests of the IGAD region.

Moreover, the financial and weapons support provided to radical groups like Al-Shabaab by some countries outside the region is not negligible in undermining the role of IGAD; and Egypt, for example, has been repeatedly accused of spoiling the peace initiatives taken or endorsed by IGAD.<sup>65</sup> To reduce external influence requires the IGAD region to act in one voice to handle the problem, which in turn calls for the renaissance of IGAD in adopting binding legal framework which imposes obligation on member states to harmonize and adopt common positions in order to promote and safeguard the interests of the IGAD region.

### **3. Conclusion and the Way Forward: Making IGAD a Viable and Vigorous Regional Bloc**

#### **3.1 Conclusion**

As one of the eight recognized building blocks of RECs, IGAD has been playing an active role in ensuring peace and security in the volatile region. It is indeed commended for its vital role in conflict prevention and mediation in the Sudanese peace talks resulting in the achievement of the CPA and in resolving the internal crisis in Somalia which reinstated the Somali government for the first time in two decades. However, the peace building attempts have not been sustained and has just been amount to ‘fire-brigade’ without resorting to the root causes of the conflicts. It has also not been able to broker and settle other major conflicts such as between Ethiopia and Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea and Kenya and Somalia. Let alone sustained pace and integration, the region has failed to achieve the very objective of addressing common problem of drought and desertification for the last three decades. Recently millions of people have been displaced and died due to human made than natural disaster. Conflict has taken much of IGAD’s efforts to address such challenges which reduces its exertions towards economic integration. Hence, by focusing on peace and security, its attempt to economic integration in the region is far from success. It has not even passed the first stage of economic integration.

Several recurrent obstacles that militate against a viable regional integration in the IGAD region among which include unrelenting lack of political will and commitment in terms of unresponsive to multi-level participation of private and civil society, unwilling to cede power to the sub-region and to incorporate regionally adopted policies into national programs; heavy economic dependency, and failing to honor financial contribution; multiple and overlapping membership that cause complications, policy incoherence and divided loyalty; poor level of economic status, communication and infrastructure; state-centric approach, intra- and inter-state unabated conflicts, mistrust and suspicion among the Member states, and absence of ‘big brother’ and external influence. All these may continue to create tension and mistrust among IGAD Member states which have negative outcome for the viability of the re-revitalized Treaty.

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East, and Sahel aimed at fostering collaboration and coordination on matters of common interest thereby contributing to the shared goal of promoting maritime security and stability while identifying opportunities for cooperation in the Red Sea arena.’

<sup>65</sup> See Abdi, 2018

### **3.2 The Way Forward: Making IGAD a Viable and Vigorous Regional Bloc**

For a viable and rigorous economic integration to happen in the IGAD region in the light of the gap uncovered in the New 2023 Treaty, the following issues need to be given due attention.

#### **In terms of Commitment**

Without political commitment and willingness by the top political leaders let alone economic integration simple regional cooperation cannot be realized. Indeed, IGAD member states continue to express and speak of collective action for a viable economic integration as evidenced in the recent re-revised new Treaty, but in practice that remains a lip service. Member states have so far have not taken real action nor are ready to design their national plans to be consistent with the promotion of effective integration for development, allow free movement of people and goods, honor their contribution nor cede power to the regional organ. So, IGAD and its member states need to devise and reconsider their concrete commitments which is sustained over a long period of time and not easily be backtrack towards a viable regional economic integration. Hence, Heads of the States and Governments should take measures such as:

- Establishing new institutions such as a court, an economic and Social Council, a parliament, a standby force and professional committees. It is possible to create these institutions based on Article 10(1)(e) of the new 2023 Treaty. Without these institutions, it is problematic for IGAD to be a viable and effective REC. In this regard, lesson can be drawn from other RECs like ECOWAS. Like ECOWAS, IGAD and its members must commit themselves to peace by the development of institutions such as fair courts that facilitate negotiation and resolution of conflicts. Thus, the creation of judiciary system (a court) where differences among the Member states can be settled is important in making IGAD a viable bloc. This will help not only to settle their differences within the region but also reduces external influences and may enhance home-grown self-rule, confidence, trust and solidarity among members.
- Strengthening the institution to have enough autonomy and own resources to undertake the tasks assigned to it should be taken. No serious development endeavor and integration program can be exclusively based on foreign assistance. Hence, self-financing mechanism that guarantees a regular and sufficient flow of resources needs to be devised. For example, the origin of self-resource can be a percentage of duties levied on goods traded within the sub-region and originating from outside the sub-region, mobilizing funds from people and different organizations, encouraging people to contribute voluntarily, and a specific tax for economic integration purposes and other possibilities. Ethiopia can be a good lesson with regard to raising the required capital for the construction of the grand renaissance dam (GERD) from local sources when the international financial institutions denied her request for a loan; and so IGAD can generate much more money than Ethiopia if it effectively mobilizes its people, local organizations. A strategy of Self-Reliance and Finance enables IGAD to escape from the historical dependence on the developed countries and their institutions. Its realization requires the engagement of local people and private sectors and stakeholders from the region and the continent like the African Development Bank.



## **In Relation to Governance**

One of the fundamental critics of IGAD is that its governance structure is patrimonial which has caused its disengagement from the civil society and private sector besides its weak and inefficient secretariat as well as its shrunken conflict resolution mechanism, which the new Treaty fails to rectify. Hence, mechanisms should be devised to create a strong supranational authority which will address governance deficit so as engage the public in the integration process for the viability of IGAD. So, the following strategy should be designed.

- The top-down approach in which decisions taken at IGAD meetings by the Heads of State or few ministers and civil servants in the ministries without the involvement of the rest of the population is one of the bottlenecks to the realization of a viable REC in the HoA sub-region. People of the region even do not know that there is a new treaty re-revitalizing IGAD due to its weakness to promote the participation of its citizenry in the governance framework. So, Member states are required to involve the different section of people (students, civil and professional associations, academicians; political parties, sport associations and other local non-governmental organizations) in the process of economic integration. The involvement of these groups will help to build trust among the people and political elites and to successfully implement the integration process. Therefore, the following measures should be taken.
- IGAD lags behind in the achievement of a free flow of goods and services, and capital which is critical for regional integration to occur. For example, though IGAD has designed a minimum integration plan in 2012 (which is superseded by AfCFTA) to eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers, it is unable to realize it. Thus, it should rethink on how to implement free movement of persons, goods, services and capital. It can start from taking simple measure which may have big impact. Hence, measures such as removal of visa requirements for the citizens of the IGAD region, promoting social gatherings and cultural exchanges through sport events and matches, organizing seminars, workshops, conferences and student and researcher exchanges, establishing sub-regional cultural and economic information. Measures and strategies such as organizing IGAD Premier League and other events can serve as mechanisms for people to know each other better, stimulate people to people interaction and optimistically, freeze stereotypes, suspicious and mistrust, and cement governmental relations.
- Given a limited human and resources capacity, IGAD need to design specific objectives: The 2021-2025 IGAD Strategy envisaged to execute a five year huge projects but the Authority has secured a very limited fund, that is, only one quarter of the total amount needed. Thus, to be successful and realize the integration objective, it should carefully select only few most important but simple projects as per the resource at hand.
- For integration in the IGAD region to be viable, intra-regional communication and infrastructure should be enhanced through unilateral, bilateral and via multilateral means. So continued effort in developing social and physical services like that of the Lamu Port such as roads, railways, airways, sea ways which connect the members of IGAD. As stated above it should also develop a strategy to secure funds for its projects owing to its emphasis on infrastructure development from various sources.
- Overlapping membership causes complications and policy incoherence due to conflicting mandates and make regional integration costly, inefficient and ineffective. Thus, to address such problems it needs considerable dialogue among REC members and the AU, the use of

mechanisms of coordination and harmonization of the policies and programs of the IGAD and reach agreements with EAC and COMESA through joint programming and partnership undertakings.

- With regard to external pressure and influence, be it from regional or global actors, IGAD like ECOWAS<sup>66</sup> should formulate and adopt common positions within the Community on issues relating to international negotiations with third parties in order to promote and safeguard the interests of the region. Just like other RECs such as ECOWAS, when agreements concluded between Member States or between Member States and non-Member States, regional organizations or any other international organizations should not be incompatible with the provisions of the IGAD Treaty, the Member State or Member States concerned shall take appropriate measures to eliminate such incompatibility. The legal framework should require Member States to assist each other to this end and adopt a common position. Therefore, a strategy and legal framework to act together as one voice and to be bound by the regional decision whether on issues of trans-boundary resource, the Red Sea or any other issue and concern to preserve the interest of the IGAD region and to refrain from cooperating with other against any member states should be designed. Such legal framework not only helps to create bonds but also build trust and confidence among member states which is essential for the viability of IGAD as a vibrant and vigorous regional bloc.

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<sup>66</sup> See Article 84 & 85 of the 1993 Revised Treaty Establishing ECOWAS