



**Remarks at Media Event & Handover of Ambulances and COVID-19 Supplies
IGAD-EU COVID-19 Response Project**

**By H.E. Rosa Malango, UN Resident Coordinator and
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Ministry of Health | 24 February 2021**

Hon. Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng, Minister of Health

H.E. Amb. Attilio Pacifici, Head of EU Delegation in Uganda

H.E Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary of IGAD

H.E Lucy Daxbacher, IGAD Head of Mission to Uganda

Government Officials

The Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the United Nations system in Uganda, I would like to convey our deep appreciation to the European Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) for the donation of medical supplies to support the exemplary COVID-19 response in Uganda focusing on the border points of Elegu, Malaba and Busia; as well as the Adjumani refugee hosting district. This global pandemic requires partnerships and collaboration across borders if we are to succeed in minimizing its impact on communities and economies.

The IGAD region stretches over an area of 5.2 million km² including Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. With over 230 million people, 50 percent of which are youth, the IGAD region is a sizeable market which provides a good opportunity for economic growth, if the youth are provided with appropriate access to learning as well as incentives to sustain their emerging enterprises and organizations. Ensuring that women and youth are equitable partners in trade, agri-business, the new digital economy as well as in humanitarian

and development programs has the potential to help accelerate regional efforts to eliminate poverty, achieve prosperity and sustain peace. IGAD also has the potential to become a regional center of excellence to address challenges such as climate action, locusts, refugees and health threats like COVID-19. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our congratulations to Uganda for having its UVRI recognized as a center of excellence for the African continent.

The donation of PPE and 2 ambulances to support the three cross border sites and Adjumani refugee settlement, are important because they address one of the critical gaps in the COVID-19 response by empowering frontline personnel at border points to ensure the safety of IGAD citizens as they trade, visit families or cross borders in search of education or employment opportunities. I would also like to convey my appreciation for including refugee hosting communities in this donation which is in line with our collective efforts to make sure that no one is left behind during these unprecedented times.

This valuable support will complement ongoing efforts by the Government of Uganda, the UN and other stakeholders to curb the spread of COVID-19 while also contributing to economic recovery and sustainable development. With a regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of over \$200 billion and a population expected to reach 400 million by 2050, facilitating trade in the IGAD region constitutes a contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

On behalf of the UN system, I reiterate our commitment to sustain our collaboration with the Governments and people of the IGAD region to achieve the SDGs including by supporting an inclusive response to the impacts of COVID-19. Allow me to mention a few examples of our support to this cause:

- The UN Migration Agency (IOM) installed solar power at 26 border crossing points as part of its partnership with the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control (DCIC) at the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In addition, automatic walk-through booth disinfectors with temperature reading capacities were provided for Entebbe International Airport and the DCIC offices. Further, at the request of the Ministry of Health, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) built a temporary screening terminal at Entebbe International Airport. Our support was critical for re-opening the airport which daily receives more than 1,000 passengers.

- UNOPS has provided Surgical masks, Surgical caps and N95 Masks to Uganda as part of its support to IGAD member states. Thanks to EU-IGAD funding, UNICEF has supported risk communication, health, water and sanitation as well as child protection in Adjumani. As part of our efforts to generate evidence for decision making, the UN in Uganda, carried out a comprehensive joint study on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 which found that the service and manufacturing sectors were disproportionately affected influencing the increase in poverty by two to eight (2-8) percentage points. The study predicted a direct loss of US\$5 billion in tourism during the next five years. As part of UN response to these findings, ten UN agencies and Stanbic Bank Uganda established an Economic Enterprise Restart Fund (EERF) to provide low-interest refinancing to micro and small enterprises including SACOOS and village saving associations to complement efforts of Government and other actors to address the impact of COVID-19.
- Through WHO, the UN has supported the Ministry of Health to conduct COVID-19 tests including the provision of test kits as well as strengthening capacities of laboratories. Further, UNDP has helped to strengthen the National Emergency Operation and Coordination Centre (NECOC) capacity to inform decision making in response to hazards and risks including locusts, floods, landslides, and people affected by COVID-19. I invite participants to visit our website Uganda.un.org to get more information on our work.

As I conclude, I would like to reiterate the commitment of the UN system to work with the Government and people of IGAD member states as well as other stakeholders to address the new challenges that have arisen as a result of COVID-19 in addition to pre-existing challenges to inclusive governance and development. We look forward to a prosperous, stable, healthy and safe Africa including its IGAD member states. Together we can ensure the new normal is a pathway to achieving national visions, the African Union Vision 2063 and the 2030 Agenda pledge to leave no one behind.

Thank you.

